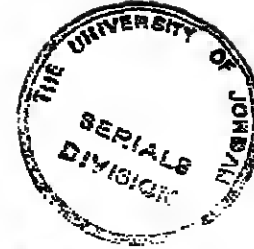


Arafat due here 'some time soon'

AMMAN (J.T.) — President of the Palestine National Authority (PNA) Yasser Arafat will visit Jordan "some time soon" though no specific date for the visit has been set yet, informed sources said Wednesday. The sources said the agreement on the visit was reached during a telephone conversation between His Majesty King Hussein and Mr. Arafat Tuesday evening. It was not clear, however, whether Mr. Arafat would arrive in Amman in time to meet also with Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu who will start an official visit to the Kingdom Friday. Sources said Mr. Arafat said he would travel to the Kingdom immediately after dealing with the repercussions of the killing of three Palestinians by Israeli police in Gaza on Tuesday. Mr. Arafat's visit will be his first to Jordan since he returned to Gaza in July.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي



Bahrain arrests 2,370 people — group

NICOSIA (AFP) — Bahraini authorities arrested 2,370 people during last month's riots and many were suffering from harsh conditions in jail, a London-based support group said Wednesday. The Committee for the Defence of Political Prisoners in Bahrain said in a statement received in Cyprus that women, children, elderly and handicapped people were among the prisoners held in jails without charge or trial. "There is no place for the prisoners even to sit on the ground" because the prisons are full, and "most of the prisoners are forced to stand all day," it said. "Tens of prisoners are (subjected to) brutal torture" by the security forces, the committee said, adding that relatives and lawyers were prevented from visiting the detainees. Recently the banned Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain (IFLB) announced that 2,200 people accused of involvement in the riots had been arrested. IFLB leader Sheikh Mohammad Ali Mahfuz called Tuesday for an international commission to be set up to investigate the clashes between security forces and Shiite Muslims.

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Majali resigns; Sharif Zeid to form cabinet

By Ghadeer Taher
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Wednesday offered his resignation to His Majesty King Hussein, paving the way for Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker to form a new government, well-informed sources said.

It was not clear whether the new government would be announced today or whether it will be delayed several days until after Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu concludes his four-day official visit to the Kingdom. Mr. Papandreu's visit will begin Friday.

Some sources expected that there was not enough time for the new government to be appointed and sworn in before the visit of the

Greek prime minister and the accompanying delegation. These sources said Dr. Majali could remain in office for several days until Sharif Zeid has had time to consult with major political groups on the make-up of his government.

However, other sources said that Sharif Zeid has had ample time to contact prospective ministers and can form his government immediately.

While the sources expected the new government to include a similar number of parliamentarians as in Dr. Majali's team, they say the new ministers will be more representative of the various political trends in the country.

"The new government will not be a big change from Dr. Majali's cabinet but it will be a credible change," said an informed source. "It will likely include people who have spoken out against past wrongs... they will be more dynamic in addressing these problems."

The new government is expected to carry out several policies in the first several weeks of its tenure to improve relations with Parliament and other opposition groups.

The new government will have to deal with the political and economic changes accompanying the Jordan-Israeli peace accord, the Kingdom's regional role and relations with the Palestinians.

The Islamists, which are not expected to join the Sharif Zeid team as a bloc, say that their members can now join the government as individuals. Whether Sharif Zeid will ask any of them to join, however, remains unclear.

Upon his return from a private visit to Austria on Monday, King Hussein said: "We are in a situation in which we continue to reconsider our conditions."

"I think we should also reconsider our situation in terms of the

need for a new start with regard to the responsibilities and challenges of the future," the King said.

Political sources said the King's recent references to the need for profound change could go beyond the government to the Royal Court and other official institutions.

Strong contenders for replacing Sharif Zeid as chief of the Royal Court include King Hussein's political advisor Marwan Qassem and Dr. Majali. However, sources could not rule out the appointment of a surprise nominee.

Among those tipped to be included in the new cabinet are: Deputies Abdul Karim Kabariti, Saleh Irshaidat, Ali Abul Ragheb, Samir

Habashneh, Awad Khleifat, Aref Bataineh, Abdullah Ensour, Abdul Karim Dughmi and Abdul Hadi Majali, former Finance Minister Basil Jardaneh, former Interior Minister Salem Masadeh, former Information Minister Ibrahim Izzeddin, Minister of Supply Adel Qudah and Minister of Industry and Trade Rima Khalaf.

Sharif Zeid formed his first government in 1989 and stepped down in late 1989 after overseeing the first democratic elections in the country since 1956.

Sharif Zeid took over the premiership again in October 1991 and stayed in power without changes until the appointment of Dr. Majali.



Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker

Greek premier visits Syria

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu held talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad here Wednesday at the start of a three-day visit, his first to Damascus for 10 years. The official Syrian news agency SANA described the meeting as "cordial." Mr. Papandreu's talks with Syrian officials were expected to focus on the role Greece could play in furthering peace in the Middle East. He was accompanied by his wife Dimitra, Liani-Papandreu and a government delegation including Foreign Minister Carolos Papoulas and Merchant Marine Minister George Katsifaras.

Gingrich named House speaker

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Newt Gingrich was elected speaker of the House of Representatives Wednesday as the new Republican majority in Congress convened its opening session. Mr. Gingrich, who was elected to the House in 1978, is the first Republican to hold the post since 1954. He takes over from Washington Democrat Thomas Foley, whose Nov. 8 mid-term defeat made him the first speaker to be unseated in over a century. House Democratic leader Dick Gephardt was also nominated for speaker, but his defeat was a foregone conclusion now that Republicans hold 53 of the 100 seats. Mr. Gingrich, who hails from Georgia, won the vote by 228 to 202 with four voting present and one absent.

Clinton seeks advice from motivation 'guru'

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton, still recovering from his party's devastating defeat, has turned to an untraditional source for advice, joining the new American craze for "personal motivation gurus." Mr. Clinton met last week at the Camp David White House retreat with Mr. Stephen Covey and Anthony Robbins, nationally-known experts whose books and tapes give advice on getting ahead in business and personal matters. A White House spokesman Mark Gearan said Tuesday, ironically, Mr. Clinton's decision to seek the new House Speaker Newt Gingrich, has also sought advice from Mr. Covey and co-wrote a student text on personal strength in American culture with him. Mr. Gearan said Mr. Clinton arranged for the meetings with Mr. Robbins and Mr. Covey himself, but stressed there was nothing unusual about their visit with Mr. Clinton, who many have blamed for his party's mid-term defeat.

Mood in Parliament over cabinet change: chances are good for improving relations

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The impending government change dominated conversations in the galleries of Parliament Wednesday though no mention of a new Cabinet, expected in the coming few days, was made during the formal session of the Lower House.

Most deputies believed that Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker will form the new government and said that this would herald better relations between the legislative and the executive authorities, reflecting positively on the relationship which has probably seen less ups than downs since the appointment of the Majali government in May 1993.

Though the initial tension resulted from Dr. Majali's recommendation to the King to dissolve the 11th Parliament and his government's change of the Election Law against the will of most political parties and deputies, lawmakers saw the way in which Dr. Majali dealt with the House after its election as a direct reason for the sometimes tense relations between the two parties.

Deputies charge Dr. Majali, whose government won a simple majority in its vote of confidence from the House, has not shown enough regard for the House and cite as example the way in which he introduced the second reshuffle to his government in June.

Though Dr. Majali then brought 10 lawmakers to the Cabinet, deputies criticised him for "failing to consult blocs" and attempting to divide them.

Dr. Majali repeatedly dismissed these charges, saying his government has respected the role of the House and worked to improve ties with it. But his assertions did little to change many deputies' views that Dr. Majali does not pay enough attention to the views of lawmakers.

Opposition deputies also accuse the government of suppressing their views, saying that the democratisation process has witnessed a visible decline since Dr. Majali took office.

Deputies opposed to the peace process charged that the government had sent the country back to the martial law era after the peace treaty was signed, denying them many of their constitutional rights to express their view on the peace process.

But saying that Sharif Zeid's politics are predicted on maintaining consultations with the House and political powers, even the Islamists, whom many say Sharif Zeid's previous government was accused of appeasing, expect a warming-up of legislative-executive relations if he takes the helm of the new government.

Sharif Zeid's government dismissed those charges at the time saying it followed policies of "inclusion" not appeasement.

ANALYSIS

Sources close to Sharif Zeid said that the power base of the Islamists at the House has in any way been reduced from 23 seats in addition to about 10 other supporters during Sharif Zeid's previous government to 17 seats plus less supporters in the current Parliament, and that will leave its mark on the policy the new government will adopt towards the Islamists.

Another element that observers quote as a factor that would help improve the government's relations with the opposition is its commitment that it will express its rejection of the peace treaty with Israel

through legal and constitutional means.

IAF spokesman Hamzeb Mansour, however, was confident that Sharif Zeid will take the initiative to improve ties with the IAF's 17-member parliamentary bloc.

And observers say Sharif Zeid will succeed in doing that because the Islamists are more than interested in restoring good ties with the regime after a period of isolation that saw them lose much of their power in the House and possibly on the street as well.

Meanwhile, deputies confirmed that Sharif Zeid has not yet started consulting them on the formation of the new government but many said they trust he will do so once he starts choosing members of his cabinet.

But many deputies expected Sharif Zeid to consult with parliamentarians as individuals and not as members of blocs, adding that any deputies who would join the government would be chosen on their own merits and not as representatives of blocs.

Sources close to Sharif Zeid, however, said that he will make a concerted effort to consult with parliamentary blocs before announcing his third government.

Crown Prince's meeting with Islamists seen to signal better political atmosphere

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has met with representatives of the Islamic movement in the Kingdom and observers said the meeting will help put back on track the Islamists' relations with the government.

Sources said the meeting, which took place Tuesday, agreed on the need for keeping bridges of communications open between the Islamists and the establishment as the best way of serving the interests of the country.

The meeting was attended by the overall leader of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, Abdul Majeed Thneibat, and the spokesman of the Islamic Action Front parliamentary bloc, Hamzeb Mansour, among other leaders of the Islamic movement. Little information was disclosed about what actually took place in the meeting but informed sources told the Jordan Times it was held in a cordial and frank atmosphere with emphasis put on the need for continuing consultation and dialogue between the Islamic movement and the government.

The sources told the Jordan Times that the president of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the Lower House of Parliament played an instrumental role in setting up the meeting. They said Mr. Mansour officially requested the meeting when Prince Hassan addressed the Foreign Affairs Committee in early December.

Meanwhile, IAF sources expected an improvement of relations between the government and the Islamic movement following the expected appointment of a new cabinet which is expected to be headed by Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker next week.

The Islamists had bad good

working relationship with the government of Sharif Zeid that resigned in May 1993.

The sources did not expect the Islamists to join the new government but said that a process of consultation will be established between the two sides, mainly through their 17-member parliamentary bloc.

They said that the "veto" within the Islamic movement against joining the government was no longer in effect in absolute terms.

"If we are approached to join the government, our decision will depend on the choice of the prime minister, his team and the government's programme," an IAF source said.

Relations between the government and the Islamists had gone sour since Dr. Majali formed his cabinet in May 1993 and the tension escalated after Jordan and Israel signed the Oct. 26 peace treaty.

The tension reached a high point when six members

of the IAF deputies boycotted the speech from the throne with which His Majesty King Hussein opened the second ordinary session of Parliament.

This unprecedented move incurred the wrath of most political groups in the country and resulted in their isolation from any leadership position in the House. The slide in relations has continued since then.

But sources said the Islamists were interested in improving relations with the government at this point, especially if the new government is headed by Sharif Zeid, who "respects the House and whose politics recognise the need for consultation with political powers in the country," as one independent Islamist deputy puts it.

The two sides have to work on improving relations, Mr. Mansour told the Jordan Times. "We will do our part and we believe Sharif Zeid will do his part too," he said.

Self-rule talks deadlocked; Israelis fire at Gaza police

Arafat, Rabin to meet next week, but PLO seen losing trust in Israel

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is losing trust in Israel, officials said here Wednesday after another round of negotiations failed to break the deadlock over extending Palestinian autonomy on the West Bank.

Tension also rose Wednesday after Israeli troops and Palestinian police exchanged fire in the Gaza Strip in the same area where Israeli forces killed three Palestinian National Authority (PNA) policemen on Monday night, witnesses said.

They said Israeli troops wounded two Palestinians, at least one of them a civilian, who was hurt in the band. It was the latest in a series of gunbattles following the killing of the policemen, residents said.

The Monday encounter,

near the Erez crossing to Israel, was the bloodiest between forces since Israeli troops handed over most of the Gaza Strip to Palestinian rule eight months ago.

The army closed the Erez crossing after the shooting incident on Wednesday, witnesses said.

As in previous cases, it was unclear who started the

shooting — or if a third source was involved. Israeli commanders speculate anti-peace gunmen provoked the Monday incident, firing from a nearby orchard before fleeing.

The violence and the crisis over expanding Jewish settlement in the West Bank cast a

(Continued on page 7)

Israeli troops kill 3 Palestinians

RAMALLAH (AFP) — Israeli troops shot and killed three Palestinians near Ramallah on the occupied West Bank Wednesday, Palestinian officials said.

The victims died in an exchange of fire with an Israeli patrol. An Israeli army spokesman confirmed that a "serious incident" had taken place near Ramallah, in which several Palestinians died, but he did not give a casualty figure or explain the circumstances. The three deaths raise to 35 the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli troops or settlers since self-rule was launched in the Gaza Strip and Jericho enclave in May.

Yeltsin orders halt to Grozny bombing, rushes ground forces

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin ordered a halt to the Russian bombing of the Chechen capital Grozny on Wednesday, his press spokesman announced, as ground reinforcements were rushed to the rebellious republic.

Yeltsin spokesman Anatoly Kravkov said "the president has ordered a halt to the bombardment of Grozny," from midnight local time (2100 GMT Wednesday).

Mr. Yeltsin made a similar announcement last week, but the bombing of the capital of the breakaway republic continued despite his statement. The dispatch of troop reinforcements was a forceful move to mark a new wave in the five-day Russian offensive to capture the city.

The bombing by Russian warplanes, which has killed civilians in addition to hitting strategic targets, has drawn growing expressions of concern from both reformist Russian deputies and the West.

The French presidency of the European Union warned Wednesday that the bloody military intervention in Chechnya could undermine relations with Moscow.

At least 27 people were killed and more than 100 injured in two separate Russian air raids around the Chechen capital on Tuesday, relief officials said in Grozny on Wednesday.

Russian media reports said

seasoned combat troops including paratroop units plus marines were being rushed to the conflict zone to beef up the Russian forces which were repulsed from Grozny over the weekend, losing dozens of tanks and scores of dead.

Boris Agapov, vice president of Ingushetia, another Russian republic which borders on Chechnya, said Wednesday that the dispatch of reinforcements was a prelude to a new assault by Russian troops on Grozny.

He said the Russian military were apparently preparing for an attack by ground troops and paratroopers — a change of tactics from the tank onslaught which failed at the weekend and produced many casualties.

Correspondents in Grozny reported Wednesday that Russian troops backed by heavy artillery and rocket fire had pushed in toward the city centre from the west.

Sergei Yushenkov, chairman of the state Duma's defence committee, was quoted by Moscow Echo radio Wednesday as saying paratroop reinforcements were en route to the conflict zone from the Beslan base in neighbouring North Ossetia.

Hours earlier the ITAR-TASS news agency said experienced reinforcements had also been sent in from the Kola Peninsula in north-west Russia to beef up the military contingent trying to

put down the Chechen rebellion. "Russia has flown (in) well-trained reinforcements and a ground force familiar with peacekeeping operations," ITAR-TASS said, quoting officials in Murmansk. It did not indicate the number of troops sent.

The agency added that 200 guards were also poised to go in.

In Vienna, an official at the Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) said the European security organisation's permanent council, its decision-making body, would meet on Jan. 12 to discuss ways of helping to stop the fighting.

Russia said it was not prepared to discuss Chechnya with foreign countries. But France urged its EU partners to demand that Mr. Yeltsin be held to account for his actions in the Chechen crisis.

"We have a right to demand explanations at the OSCE. I have contacted our 14 partners of the European Union so that we turn to Russia and ask Russia to give an explanation," French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said in Paris.

Russia sent troops to Chechnya on Dec. 11 to smash the tiny mainly-Muslim region's bid for independence. It launched a tank-led assault on Grozny, an oil-refining centre of 400,000

(Continued on page 7)

Home News

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'First multi-channel T.V. service to start'

By Khattab Salman
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan is to start its first multi-channel television service this month, Director General of Jordan Radio and Television Corporation (JRTVC) Ihsan Ramzi said Wednesday.

Mr. Ramzi told the Jordan Times that the five channels system will be provided immediately in the capital, Amman, and in three other governorates later in the year.

He said that this service, which is known as multi-points/multi-destination distribution system (MMDS), will offer subscribers five channels that can be received through a special, built-in decoder that will be installed in subscribers' television sets by

JRTVC.

He added that the corporation will enjoy a monopoly over the service in Amman, but will go into a partnership with the private sector in the other governorates.

"The governorates of Zarqa, Irbid and Ma'an will be provided with the service through JRTVC and the Arab Media Company," Mr. Ramzi added. The Arab Media Company (AMC) is a Jordanian subsidiary of the Saudi Arabia Radio and Television Network owned by Sheikh Saleh Abdullah Kamel.

The Cabinet Tuesday approved a request by AMC to establish a joint venture with JRTVC to provide the three governorates with the MMDS service.

He said subscribers will pay JD15 per month with no initial downpayment as was announced earlier.

JRTVC had announced last year that subscribers would have to pay a JD150 refundable insurance payment for the decoder set, JD150 for an initial installation fee, and JD10 per month in subscription fees.

"Subscribers will now pay JD15 per month for five television channels. These channels will be CNN International, BBC International, the Arabic movies channel, a foreign movies channel, and a joint channel for children's programmes in the morning and sports in the evening," Mr. Ramzi said.

He added that the number of channels would be increased to eight in the future.

Petra, UPI sign uplink agreement

By Khattab Salman
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian official press entered the international arena Wednesday with the signing of a satellite transmission agreement between United Press International (UPI) and the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The transmission will be carried out through UPI satellites providing uplinks covering Europe and the Middle East, the Pacific Rim and Asia, and North America.

According to the agreement, Petra will transmit in English and Arabic to UPI's offices all over the world, which in turn will retransmit to its subscribers.

UPI is owned by the U.S.-based Worldwide News, Inc., which is partly owned by a group of Saudi Arabian businessmen who reportedly saved the corporation from bankruptcy two years ago.

The one-year, automatically renewable agreement states that UPI will provide its own wires to Petra at no cost, and will provide Petra's reports to any subscriber who wishes to receive them.

UPI's 15 satellites global network will carry Petra's 50,000 words-daily bulletin, in addition to a downlink through local offices of UPI

by a lease line or a satellite receiver.

In addition, Petra's wires can be received by satellite dish receivers receiving the Middle East Broadcasting Centre transmission in the Middle East, and those receiving NBC in the United States with the help of a decoder that can be linked to their receivers.

The 24-hour, 300 bauds per second channel will carry Petra's reports under Petra's name with no editorial changes to the content of the agency's reports, but at the same time UPI will not be liable or responsible for the redistributed reports.

The agreement was signed by Minister of Information Jawad Anani and UPI Executive Editor and Vice President Raphael Calis.

Dr. Anani said after the signing ceremony that Jordan aims at tapping international news technology which can be achieved through this agreement.

He said that the agreement would also provide Jordan with feedback channels as well as a good opportunity to enhance cooperation among Arab news agencies.

Mr. Calis said that the agreement was signed in accordance with a decision taken by the Federation of Arab News Agencies



Minister of Information Jawad Anani and United Press International Vice President Raphael Calis sign a satellite transmission agreement (Petra photo)

(FANA) at its conference in Beirut last month, to encourage FANA members to transmit their news internationally via satellite uplinks.

He said that this agreement with Petra is the UPI's first with a FANA member, and that similar agreements will be signed in the future with other Arab news agencies.

He added that UPI views this agreement not only as a

business deal, but more as an alliance and partnership between Petra and UPI.

Director General of Petra Abdullah Otoum said that the agreement "places Petra in a position to transmit news internationally, especially at this important period in the region's history in the wake of signing the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty."

The Cabinet approved the

agreement two weeks ago after the FANA meeting in Beirut on Dec. 17.

Mr. Otoum noted that this service will allow Jordan to transmit news about its affairs and principles, and that Petra will initiate its transmission via 3 satellites covering 20 areas around the world including Jordan's two information bureaus in Washington and London.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Seminar to address population needs

AMMAN (Petra) — The General Secretariat of the National Population Committee in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund today (Thursday) held a seminar on the basic needs of Jordan's population up to the year 2005. Participants will discuss a study on the Kingdom's population needs by linking them with demographic, economic and social aspects.

Aqaba working on development plans

AQABA (Petra) — Acting president of the Aqaba Regional Authority Fayez Khasawneh Wednesday said the authority is working on developing the region by preparing scientific studies and plans. At a meeting with a delegation representing residents of Al-Disa area, Dr. Khasawneh said the authority is determined to organise the tourism sector in Rum and Al Disa areas in a manner benefiting the residents of the two areas. Dr. Khasawneh also met with leaders of Al Amman and Al Sa'adeen tribes in Al Rishieh and Qorqirah areas and stressed the importance of cooperation among citizens in agricultural projects and in using available resources to supplement the incomes of poor families.

University, UNIMED explore cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — University of Jordan President Fawzi Gharaibeh Wednesday met with a delegation from the Rome-based University of the Mediterranean (UNIMED) for talks on enhancing cooperation between the two universities in scientific and academic fields as part of the activities of the Mediterranean centre which will be opened here in the future. Discussion also focused on means of developing programmes offered by the University of Jordan and the Ministry of Tourism to prospective tour guides.

IAF plans solidarity rally in support of Chechenya

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Islamic Action Front (IAF) party Wednesday called on the citizens of Zarqa to gather for a public rally Friday at IAF headquarters on the Amman Zarqa highway.

A copy of the announcement, which was made available to the Jordan Times, said that the rally was designed to show solidarity with the Chechen Muslim people now facing a Russian attack on their country.

The IAF last week sent a message to Russian President Boris Yeltsin urging his country to end military intervention in Chechenya and stressing that armed conflict

would damage the interests of both the Russian and the Chechen peoples.

The IAF statement Wednesday said that the rally, which will be organised at 1:00 p.m. is expected to be addressed by the following Islamists: Mohammad Al Haj, Yaser Omari, Nabil Shichani, Abdullah Haddad and Daifallah Al Khalaleh.

In its Dec. 23 message to President Yeltsin, the IAF warned that the conflict in Chechenya was bound to trigger a long war of attrition, with the two sides paying a heavy price similar to conflicts in Afghanistan and Vietnam.

ACC loans farmers, developers JD14.3m

AMMAN (Petra) — The Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) granted a total of JD14.3 million in loans to farmers and land developers during 1994, benefiting 5,687 farmers and farm owners, according to a statement Wednesday by ACC Director General Mohammad Arabiyat.

Mr. Arabiyat said that the loans were used to finance the reclamation of land, the purchase of farm implements, the construction of poultry farms, the purchase of agricultural inputs and machinery.

Nearly 80 per cent of the loans went to small farmers, and 70 per cent of the total number of borrowers were first-time ACC loan recipients, added Mr. Arabiyat. Last year borrowers repaid JD12.3 million to the ACC, compared to JD10.5 million

in 1993, Mr. Arabiyat said. According to the director general the total amount of loans to farmers at the start of year stood at JD13.6 million, but the ACC is now rescheduling loan repayments on an instalment basis in view of the difficult circumstances resulting from the past agricultural season.

Mr. Arabiyat said he expects that more farmers would borrow from the ACC over the next few years because the ACC expects increased land development and exports in the wake of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty and the opening of new markets for Jordanian agricultural produce in Arab Gulf states and Europe.

Mr. Arabiyat expects ACC loan applications would amount to no less than JD98 million over the next four years.

Commerce groups sign twinning protocol

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Federations of Chambers of Commerce in Jordan and Palestine Wednesday announced a "twinning protocol" to promote cooperation.

Haider Murad, chairman of the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Com-

merce, told the Jordan Times that under the protocol the two federations will work to facilitate the passage of trade and economic information.

Mr. Murad said the Jordanian federation is awaiting visits by Palestinian businessmen to explore areas of joint investment and trade.

Visiting Israeli team expects trade with Jordan soon

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An Israeli business group wound up a three-day visit to Jordan after talks with businessmen here on trade links and possibilities of joint ventures in various sectors of the economy.

Summing up the results of the visit, Dan Gillerman, president of the Israeli Federation of Chambers of Commerce, told a press conference that he expected trade to begin soon between Jordan and Israel, setting an example for Egypt, whose private sector economic ties with the Jewish state remain largely stagnant despite the Camp David peace agreements of 1979.

Mr. Gillerman, whose 25-member delegation included Israeli industrialists, importers, bankers and tour operators, said the discussions the team held here covered possibilities of joint projects which could take advantage of Israel's privileged trade status with North American and European countries.

The Israeli team met with the chairman and board of the Jordanian Federation of Chambers of Commerce as well as a large segment of the Kingdom's private sector during the visit which began on Monday.

The delegation was visiting Petra late Wednesday before returning home across the Wadi Arara Crossing in the south, one of the most visible signs of the state of peace between Jordan and Israel.

Among the delegation members were the heads of some of the largest importing and distributing firms as well as department stores in Israel, who discussed the possibilities of importing Jordanian products, but



President of the Israeli Federation of Chambers of Commerce Dan Gillerman (centre) and Israeli businessman Yacov Nimrodi (right) hold a press conference after a three-day visit to Jordan (Petra photo)

there was no word whether any concrete deals were finalised.

Mr. Gillerman said that he expected the Israeli government to permit the import of some Jordanian products even before the two countries formalise a trade accord in May this year.

Among the delegation members was Yacov Nimrodi, a former Israeli military officer and arms dealer who played a key role in the transfer of arms to Iran in exchange for American hostages held in Lebanon in what came to be known as the Iran-contra scandal.

In comments to the Associated Press in an interview, Mr. Nimrodi said he was no longer interested in the arms trade and was seeking to invest in Jordan in agriculture and tourism.

Mr. Nimrodi, whose leading business associates include Saudi Arabian millionaire Adnan Khashoggi, said he was planning to build a 500-room hotel on the Jordanian shore of the Red Sea and another hotel near the Dead Sea in part-

nership with a Jordanian hotelier.

Mr. Nimrodi, who was born in Iraq before his family migrated to Israel when the Jewish state was created in 1948, and served as Israel's military attaché in Tehran for many years, said he also wanted to invest in Jordan's agriculture sector.

Mr. Nimrodi, who now heads a Tel Aviv-based holding company, is known to have approached the Palestine National Authority (PNA) with proposals to build industrial projects in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to develop the Palestinian agriculture sector.

In his comments at the press conference, Mr. Gillerman said Jordanian and Israeli businessmen were serious in their efforts to launch joint projects and establish close trade relations, an interest he attributed to the policies adopted by His Majesty King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

However, he said, be

found an obvious reluctance on the part of Jordanian businessmen to adopt a fast pace in negotiations if only because they wanted to see progress in Israel's peace talks with Syria and Lebanon and an overall peace settlement taking hold in the region.

Mr. Gillerman said his discussions here also covered the 160 joint Jordanian-Israeli projects that were presented as proposals at the Casablanca conference on economic development of the Middle East and North Africa held late last year and issues related to an Amman conference to be held in mid-1995 as a follow-up to the Casablanca gathering.

The Israeli delegation head emphasised the need to develop economic relations and cooperation between Jordan and Israel to maintain and foster the state of peace between them and to enable the people to reap the economic dividends of peace beyond the shifts in the political climate in the region.

He said Jordanian-Israeli cooperation could expand to include Egyptian and Palestinian businessmen and benefit the Middle East region as a whole. As and when Israel makes peace with Syria and Lebanon, the business communities from those countries could also join, he said.

Mr. Gillerman lamented the state of relations between Egyptian and Israeli private sectors as "a big disappointment," and said that he believed that "with Jordan, things could happen much quicker."

"Jordan and Israel will do it quickly, and they will set a model to show that it can be done," he said. "Now that Israel and Jordan are getting so close together we can see also the Egyptians waking up. This is part of competition now that they are no more alone in this club of peacemakers."

According to Reuters, an opinion poll published in Cairo on Wednesday showed that most Egyptians have no wish to visit Israel, buy Israeli goods or let Israeli factories be built in Egyptian territory.

Mr. Gillerman said representatives of Israeli banks in his delegation had signed five cooperation accords with Jordanian counterparts. He did not elaborate.

It was not immediately known whether any Israeli bank was seeking to establish branches in Jordan.

The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) has said that there was no hurdle for Israeli banks to set up operations in the Kingdom under the prevailing rules and regulations that govern commercial banking in the country, and that they would be treated as any other foreign commercial bank in Jordan.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

CUBAN FILM WEEK

* Film entitled "La Bella de la Alhambra" at Instituto Cervantes (the Spanish Cultural Centre) on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

FILM

* Film entitled "Around the World in 80 Days" at the American Center on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

CONCERTS

* "Hard Rock" concert by Maybe band at the Royal Cultural Centre on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

* Our concert by Salma Shukur at the Royal Cultural Centre on Thursday at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Exhibition of works by Mahmud Obeidi at Darat Al Fann. Also showing an exhibition of portraits by Mahmoud Zaid and the exhibition of contemporary Arab artists.

* Exhibition of paintings by Issam and Tamam Shamout at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.

Ministry reviews recipients of staple ration coupons

By Samir Barhoum
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A total of 3,747,000 Jordanians of an estimated 3,800,000 entitled to receive ration coupon cards enabling them to purchase basic staples at government subsidised prices used the coupons in 1994, according to Ministry of Supply officials.

Ministry Secretary General Mustafa Khleifat said that of the 716,757 families registered at the ministry, only 650,000 used their ration coupons, which entitle them to purchase rice, sugar and milk at subsidised prices. The difference prompted the ministry to conduct a review of the number of families who will get the coupons in the future.

Mr. Khleifat said that of a total of about 50,000 Palestinian refugees from Gaza who hold temporary two-year Jordanian pas-

ports and are commonly referred to as Gazans, 49,500 used the ration coupons last year.

A recent census by the Statistics Department showed that the population of Jordan stands at 4,095,579, with 3,779,118 Jordanians and 316,461 foreigners. Only Jordanians and Gazans are entitled to receive ration coupons, introduced by the ministry in 1990 to save funds budgeted by the government to subsidise basic food supplies.

The head of the Coupons Department at the ministry, Mohammad Abu Shakra, said that by mid-January the ministry will have completed all the studies on the number of beneficiaries for 1995, noting that the ministry started distributing the 1995 coupons about three months ago.

Mr. Abu Shakra said beneficiaries will this year receive the cards only once

instead of three times a year as was the routine earlier to save them extra effort and to reduce bureaucratic procedures. But he stressed that each set of the coupons will be valid for four months and urged beneficiaries to use them before their expiry date.

According to ministry regulations, each eligible Jordanian adult is entitled to 1.5 kilograms of rice, and 1.5 kilograms of sugar monthly, in addition to one kilogramme of powdered milk every three months.

Mr. Abu Shakra said Jordan spent JD 15 million in 1994 to subsidise the basic food commodities purchased by coupons.

The Kingdom used to spend up to JD 60 million per year for food subsidies in the late 1980s. It has gradually brought down the amount by introducing the coupons in 1990.

One of the first measures sought by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the economic restructuring programme prescribed for Jordan was the withdrawal of subsidies.

Jordan resisted IMF pressure and sought instead to reduce spending in other sectors and only gradually cut the subsidies.

As one method of reducing amounts spent on subsidising staples, the government decided to distribute food coupons only to families with an annual income of less than 6,000, but according to Mr. Abu Shakra, the decision was never implemented.

He said it was difficult for the ministry to define the incomes of families and it ruled out using data collected by the Statistics Department last month. The ministry, he added, counts families in the Kingdom based on the number of family registration books,

while the Department of Statistics counts all people living in one house as one family regardless of the number of family registration books within that household.

To avoid any injustice, the ministry opted to ignore the income bracket method and to continue to offer coupons to all those entitled, he said.

Last month, Minister of Supply Adel Qudah stressed that the government will continue to subsidise basic food commodities, saying that in 1994 the government budgeted JD 40 million alone to subsidise bread.

Mr. Qudah told a Parliament session that the government will continue to subsidise the prices of wheat, flour, sugar, rice, powdered milk, frozen chicken, and olive oil.

He said all these commodities were imported at international prices and

sold to the people at much lower prices, noting that the subsidy policy would continue despite the fluctuation of prices in international markets.

He said that in 1994 the price of a tonne of wheat rose on the international market from \$119 to \$175, sugar went from \$340 to \$462 per tonne, rice from \$280 to \$418 per tonne and dried milk from \$23 a carton to \$35.

According to Mr. Khleifat, Jordan consumes 650,000 tonnes of wheat annually, of which only 50,000 are produced locally. The government, he said, pays JD 8 million to buy the locally produced wheat before reselling it at subsidised prices.

Mr. Khleifat said Jordan annually consumes 500,000 tonnes of barley, 350,000 tonnes of corn, 170,000 tonnes of sugar, 80,000 tonnes of rice as well as 750,000 cartons of powdered milk.

France's undeclared presidency campaign shifts up a gear

PARIS (R) — France's undeclared campaign for the presidency has shifted into a high gear as election hopefuls such as Prime Minister Edouard Balladur prepare to declare themselves as candidates within the next two weeks.

Shadow-boxing has so far dominated politics ahead of the April/May contest to succeed Socialist President François Mitterrand, who will step down after 14 years in power.

But Mr. Balladur has now told ministers in his centre-right government that they are free to express their personal preferences for candidates, officials said Wednesday.

"The rule was that we shouldn't speak of the elections before January. We're in January so we can talk," he will tell a government spokesman Nicolas Sarkozy told reporters.

Mr. Balladur, widely expected to run and whose fellow-Gaullist rival Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac declared his candidacy last month, has acknowledged

that time is running short. Anxious to capitalise on his aloof nature above the political fray, Mr. Balladur has always stressed that he is too busy to think about the election but has promised to decide this month.

The covert campaign has divided the government, made up of Mr. Balladur's and Mr. Chirac's — Rally for the Republic (RPR) and the centrist Union for French Democracy (UDF). The RPR is split while most UDF members favour the more moderate Balladur.

This week, Dominique Perben, the RPR minister for overseas territories, became the latest cabinet member behind Mr. Balladur. Other including Foreign Minister Alain Juppé, back Mr. Chirac.

"Now we're going to see one minister after another declaring his support for one candidate or the other. It's a hateful spectacle, and it's not what a presidential election is about," Socialist leader Henri Emmanuelli complained Wednesday.

"I fear that Balladur will manage not the affairs of France but instead his own election campaign," he told Europe-1 Radio.

Sources close to Mr. Balladur quoted by French newspapers said he was expected to throw his hat into the ring just after an extraordinary session of parliament due to end on Jan. 16.

The daily Liberation reported Mr. Balladur's camp had already chosen its campaign headquarters, a building conveniently close to the Matignon offices on the left bank of the Seine River.

The newspaper said that Balladur supporters met Tuesday to organise the campaign and set up regional committees — due to include elected officials from the RPR and UDF in equal numbers — to coordinate efforts at grass-roots level.

Budget Minister Sarkozy, a leading light in the Balladur camp, urged the premier however not to show his hand too soon because of the disarray among the opposition Socialists.

"As long as there is no official Socialist candidate, all the others are running around like headless chickens," he said.

Further to the right, anti-Maastricht campaigner Philippe de Villiers will announce his candidacy Sunday, the daily Ouest-France said Wednesday. Another possible candidate is centrist ex-Premier Raymond Barre, who has no party ties.

With the Socialists shattered by the refusal to ousting European Commission head Jacques Delors to stand, Mr. Emmanuelli pledged the party would find a candidate by early February.

"All I can say is that our candidate must have wide support in the Socialist movement, as well as support outside it, and be ready to spearhead a real debate," he said.

Mr. Mitterrand himself is rumoured to favour former Interior and Defence Minister Pierre Joxe, but other possible Socialist candidates include Mr. Emmanuelli and ex-Premier Pierre Mauroy.



Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk waves to well-wishers Wednesday upon arriving from Beijing, where he has been recuperating from a cancer treatment. King Sihanouk will stay in Cambodia for three months (AFP photo)

Sihanouk returns home in good health

PHNOM PENH (R) — A smiling and healthy-looking King Norodom Sihanouk returned to Cambodia Wednesday afternoon after prolonged cancer treatment abroad, to an enthusiastic and colourful welcome from thousands of people.

King Sihanouk, accompanied by his wife Queen Monique, arrived at Phnom Penh's Airport aboard a North Korean plane.

"I miss you, I miss you all very much. Thank you, thank you. I'm recovered now, thank you," he told the crowds.

He was welcomed by co-premiers Prince Norodom Ranariddh, his son, and Hun Sen, the president of the National Assembly, Chea Sim and diplomats and senior government officials.

King Sihanouk, 72, has been undergoing treatment in Beijing for cancer and other ailments since October 1993. He last returned home for six weeks in April and May last year.

King Sihanouk said Wednesday he would be back for three and a half months before returning to Beijing for medical checks.

"His health, according to his doctors, is very good, excellent. That's why he is able to come back to the country," government spokesman Sieng Lapresse said. "We hope is going to stay here permanently."

Mr. Lapresse said the king would spend only a short time in the capital before leaving for Siem Reap in the northwest, the site of the ancient 12th-century Angkor Temples.

The French colonial power crowned Sihanouk king in 1941 when he was 18, believing he would be more impressionable than other royal candidates. Instead, he showed a flair for diplomacy and snatched independence from France 12 years later.

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King Sihanouk appeared touched by the welcome and waved enthusiastically from his car.

Mr. Lapresse said King Sihanouk's cabinet office would be temporarily moved to Siem Reap and "announcements" were expected.

He said King Sihanouk "might take up some kind of state duties", adding that the king had asked for a simple welcome without any parades.

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Sri Lanka ceasefire expected before Jan. 14

COLOMBO (AFP) — A truce between Sri Lanka government forces and Tamil Tiger guerrillas will come into force on Jan. 14 to coincide with a new round of peace talks, Information Minister Dharmasiri Senanayake said Wednesday.

"A cessation of hostilities" will be in place before the third round of talks with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the rebel-held northern Jaffna peninsula on Jan. 14, the minister said.

He said both sides had agreed to invite foreigners to monitor the truce. The minister said the move was not a formal ceasefire but an informal agreement to stop hostile activities.

Military officials said the agreement could be upgraded to a ceasefire, depending on the initial response from Tigers who have been fighting to establish an independent homeland called Eelam.

A statement from President Chandrika Kumaratunga's office Wednesday said the government wanted the LTTE to suggest dates for substantive negotiations but there had been no response yet from the rebels.

"The LTTE has not yet agreed to commence peace talks," the statement said, referring to substantive negotiations to hammer out a solution to the conflict which has claimed over 30,000 lives in 23 years.

It said there was also no agreement on opening a land route to Jaffna where the LTTE maintains its own police, civil administration and communication systems.

Talks between Colombo and the LTTE so far have focused on economic issues as well as the need to stop the fighting, officials said.

Mr. Senanayake said the president was expected to give details of the discussions with the LTTE and her efforts to resolve the ethnic conflict Friday.

Mrs. Kumaratunga, a member of the majority Sinhalese community, has agreed in principle to grant greater autonomy to ethnic Tamils but the amount of authority to be devolved remains a thorny issue.

Despite the initial euphoria expressed by the head of the government peace mission after Tuesday's talks, other Tamil parties and political analysts say the country is still a long way from peace.

Anti-LTTE Tamil legislator Dharmalingam Sihanayake, whose deputy was killed by suspected Tiger gunmen on New Year's Eve, said he wanted an "all encompassing ceasefire" with guarantees of their safety.

"We favour a cessation of hostilities. But some deterrent or a monitoring mechanism is necessary given the record of the LTTE," said L. Keethiwaran, the spokesman of the leftist Eelam Liberation Front.

Previous ceasefires have ended in disaster leading to more violence. Analysts believe the latest truce bid may also fail unless it was coupled with political negotiations.

U.K. alleged killer's daughter 'tried suicide'

LONDON (AFP) — The daughter of alleged serial killer Frederick West tried to kill herself just hours after her father's death, the tabloid Today newspaper reported Wednesday.

Anne Marie West, 30, took an overdose, but was found by her boyfriend and taken to hospital, said the paper, adding that she had been distraught at news of her father's apparent suicide Sunday.

"Anne Marie was in a terrible state. She had been abused by Fred but she still stood by him," an aunt told the paper.

According to Today, Anne Marie had regularly visited her father in prison.

It said she had been increasingly concerned for his sanity, and that Mr. West had admitted before Christmas he wanted to take his life.

Anne Marie was understood to have told police her fears, and Mr. West was put under special watch at the prison where he was held in Birmingham, the English Midlands.

But that watch was later relaxed, after it was considered Mr. West was not at risk.

Angolan, rebel army leaders to meet on peace accord

LUANDA (R) — Angola's army chief and the UNITA rebels' senior military officer have agreed to meet for talks expected to thrash out problems over the shaky ceasefire in their long war.

The state daily Jornal De Angola said Wednesday army General Joao De Matos and UNITA's Arlindo Chenda Pena "Ben Ben" would meet in the central highlands province of Huambo, scene of some of the worst fighting in the latter stages of the conflict.

Both sides accuse each other of launching attacks despite the peace accord and ceasefire agreed in November — the latest of several attempts to end nearly 20 years of war.

A joint government-UNITA commission to oversee implementation of the truce has held several sessions in Luanda but has failed to reach agreement on issues under discussion.

Diplomats in Luanda said a meeting between the two chiefs of staff could help dispel some of the deep distrust between the government and members of Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

No date was announced but the U.N.'s special representative to Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye, said Saturday he expected the meeting to take place this week.

Jornal De Angola said a meeting between Gen. De Matos and Gen. Ben Ben could take place between the government-held provincial capital of Huambo and the town of Bailundo, 65 kilometres to the north.

Thailand approves constitutional changes

BANGKOK (R) — Thailand's parliament Wednesday overwhelmingly passed a historic package of amendments to the constitution that aim to broaden democracy in a country long plagued by coups.

Thailand has seen at least 17 successful or attempted coups since the end of absolute monarchy in 1932. Scores of pro-democracy protesters were gunned down in May 1992.

The 360 elected members of the lower house and 270 appointed senators voted 591 to one in a joint session of parliament to approve amendments which include a younger voting age and abolition of centuries-old discrimination against women.

There was one abstention and the remainder failed to vote.

"Compared to previous constitutions, this amended one provides more democracy," president of the parliament Pradit Bunag told reporters.

The new constitution, backed by the government of Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, includes amendments lowering the voting age to 18 from 20, ensuring equal rights for women and reducing the members of the military-dominated senate to two-thirds of the lower house.

It also authorises setting up an administrative court which will adjudicate in cases against the state.

One key change that failed to be included would have created new local government councils elected for fixed terms. Two amendments providing for this were scuttled in December after one party in the ruling coalition joined the opposition to vote against them.

Local politicians and Western diplomats agreed the key amendment is the reduction of the voting age, which will increase the number of eligible voters and make vote-buying more difficult and more expensive.

Amending the constitution was previously the preserve of a succession of coup-makers. Wednesday's vote reforms a charter drawn up under a junta known as the National Peace Keeping Council, after the army overthrew the elected government of Chuan Choonhavan in 1991.

Although the junta was dissolved before elections in 1992, former members were instrumental in nominating unopposed General Suchinda Kraprayoon as prime minister, a miscalculation which led to massive street demonstrations in May that year.

The army crushed the protest, killing scores of demonstrators and wounding hundreds, but Gen. Suchinda was forced to resign.

Islanders, tourists free Vanuatu dolphins

SYDNEY (R) — A jubilation of marine experts and volunteers Wednesday freed 15 starving dolphins that were trapped for more than two weeks in a lagoon on the South Pacific island nation of Vanuatu, one of the world's poorest.

Hundreds of islanders, tourists and volunteers guided by Australian marine experts, have been trying over the past two days to release the spinner dolphins from the shallow lagoon near the Vanuatu capital, Port Vila. "Everyone is very relieved that at least some of them have been freed," volunteer Lynne Cowper told Reuters from a resort that sits on a tiny island in the lagoon. A total of 20 dolphins, including 10 calves, became trapped in the shallow waters of the lagoon last month. They were unable to swim out because of the rocks and shoals surrounding the mouth of the lagoon. For have died of starvation and nine remain trapped, said Mr. Cowper, who co-manages Erakor Island resort. The dolphins freed Wednesday were herded into a corner of the lagoon Wednesday afternoon using a large net and then carried in blankets across a sandy spit to the sea, he said. "But there were a few dolphins that did not get into the net," Mr. Cowper said, adding that an attempt to free the others would be made on Thursday morning.

Bardot calls for pigeon birth control

BESSIERES, France (AFP) — Animal lover Brigitte Bardot has protested a plan to massacre pigeons infesting this southwestern French village and is urging the birds' given contraceptive seeds to be distributed.

In a letter to all the villagers, the 60-year-old film star said: "There are many humane solutions, notably contraceptive seeds avoiding excessive proliferation of the pigeons." The mayor of Bessieres, Jean-Paul Segnol, who is a doctor and a member of the Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, is planning to flush the pigeons out of the church tower so they can be shot by local hunters, starting Friday.

Mr. Segnol says that the pigeons are particularly attracted to Bessieres and are badly damaging the church steeple, but in her letter, Bardot attacked the mayor for attacking "that universal symbol of fragile peace that the dove." Last year, Bardot called for a balance of the budget, pleaded for the life of a wolf hiding out in the Vosges Mountains of eastern France which has so far killed 82 farm animals, including 22 lambs and two calves. In June she fell out with her longstanding hometown of Saint-Tropez after the municipality authorities held the holding of a hunters' conference, and left the French Riviera resort. But she returned in December and was turned to her home. In July she attacked Italian Senator Sophia Loren for accepting "blood money" to promote fur coats. "To possess a fur coat," Bardot said, "is to wear a cemetery on one's back."

Republicans take charge

WASHINGTON (R) — The House banking committee on Tuesday took over the reins of the House from the Democrats, after a year of White House Republican investigations.

The Senate also took over the reins of the Senate from the Democrats, after a year of White House Republican investigations.

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India's Rao stands up for free-market reforms

CALCUTTA (R) — Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao staunchly defended his free-market economic policies Wednesday, saying he had not sold off the nation's interests to foreigners and would pursue more reforms.

Mr. Rao, facing unrest from his Congress Party before state polls next month and general elections next year, brushed aside critics who claim his three-year liberalisation programme has sacrificed India's teeming poor and hurt his political party.

"I should like to announce with no hesitation that we are firmly committed to our reforms programme and shall move forward with confidence," Mr. Rao told an International Business Conference in the eastern city of Calcutta.

Mr. Rao's address to the Confederation of Indian Industries, billed by senior aides as a major policy speech, left little doubt he would continue dismantling barriers to trade and investment.

He said the nation backed economic reforms.

"I am aware that the path of reforms is not a bed of roses," he said, adding liberalisation meant tough political choices.

"But like many countries which have attempted liberalisation, have worked through it and have performed economic miracles, I am convinced that this is also the appropriate approach for us at this juncture," he said.

Mr. Rao has come under pressure from critics within his ruling Congress Party to slow down the liberalisation drive and offer greater welfare benefits to ordinary people.

Congress was routed in state elections last month and faces tough battles in another five states beginning in February. General elections are due in 1996.

Mr. Rao's leading Congress rival, former Human Resources Minister Arjun Singh, challenged the prime minister by resigning his cabinet post last month. Mr. Singh accused Mr. Rao of failing to put a "human face" on reforms and ignoring corruption.

But Mr. Rao said he had offered special schemes to sections of society bypassed by the benefits of liberalisation, including small firms, and would continue to do so without relying on short-term "palliatives" that could hurt the economy.

"I have laid emphasis on the human face from the very beginning," he said in a direct rebuttal to Mr. Singh.

Rahul Bajaj, chairman of India's leading scooter-maker Bajaj Auto, said he was reassured by Mr. Rao's speech. "There was a fear that liberalisation would be set back," he told Reuters.

The prime minister said India could not stand by while business barriers came down across the rest of the world. "We cannot remain an island but have to see ourselves as part of the global system," he said.

Mr. Rao acknowledged some unscrupulous people had abused the liberalisation drive but malpractices were no reason to turn back. A large number of bankers, brokers and government officials have been linked to a \$1.3 billion stock market scandal which erupted at the outset of the economic reforms.

"I do not believe the direction in which we are heading needs to be given up merely on account of these incidents," Mr. Rao said.

"Some criticism has been voiced that foreign investors would swamp our economy," Mr. Rao said, referring to complaints that overseas investors have snapped up valuable national resources.

"Neither are we being swamped nor are we selling away our country," Mr. Rao said, adding that the volume of foreign investment was well below India's needs.

Indonesia hits out at Portugal over East Timor

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia accused Portugal Wednesday of taking an aggressive stance before fresh U.N.-brokered talks on the troubled territory of East Timor.

Foreign Minister Ali Alatas told a news conference Indonesia hoped the one-day meeting in Geneva Monday would help achieve a compromise over divergent views on Portugal's former colony, which Indonesia invaded in 1975 and annexed the following year.

"They continue to pursue a very aggressive and highly inflammatory attitude towards this issue of East Timor, which is not very helpful towards creating confidence and an atmosphere conducive to the solution of the problem," he said.

In East Timor, an official told local reporters that five East Timorese were killed when ethnic fighting swept the town of Baucau, 180 kilometres east of the capital Dili, Sunday.

Indonesia's military has said one person was killed, a figure repeated by Mr. Alatas Wednesday.

Mr. Alatas said: "We expect the talks will continue on its original intent to find a compromise. Portugal has not changed its attitude. It has not changed its tune since 1975."

U.N. Secretary-General

Bourros Ghali will chair the meeting in Geneva between Mr. Alatas and his Portuguese counterpart, Jose Manuel Durao Barroso.

It is the fifth in a series of U.N.-brokered talks in three years. The United Nations regards Portugal as East Timor's administering authority.

Mr. Alatas said Jakarta had sincerely implemented a series of confidence-building measures assigned to it from the fourth round of talks in May 1994. He said these included allowing a U.N. special rapporteur and the foreign press to enter the territory.

He accused Lisbon of doing little to improve dialogue or the underlying situation in mainly Catholic East Timor. Human rights groups say more than 200,000 people have died, many from starvation, since Indonesia invaded.

"We would like to ask the Portuguese what they have done. Unfortunately, I have not seen much of Portugal's implementation of their confidence-building measures," he said.

"For instance, to exercise restraint and contribute to creating a favourable atmosphere, these are things that are expected to Portugal but I do not see much."

Mainly Muslim Indonesia has faced dwindling guerrilla resistance to its rule in East Timor. But lingering civilian resentment over Jakarta's rule and the presence of Indonesian immigrants has boiled over into riots and protests several times in recent months.

Residents and diplomats said Wednesday that Baucau, did not say how the five East Timorese were killed.

There was similar rioting last November in East Timor's capital Dili, where troops in 1991 shot dead up to 200 marchers at a funeral and sparked an international outcry.

Also Wednesday, Mr. Alatas said Indonesia supports in principle an expanded permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council and believes Japan and Germany have strong claims.

But Mr. Alatas told a news conference some developing countries should join at the same time for balance in the Council, whose permanent members are Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States.

We believe and support the argument that if the permanent membership... is extended that Japan and Germany should have strong grounds to be permanent members," he said.

Both countries — which with Italy formed the backbone of the axis powers defeated by the allies in World War II — were playing "very important" world roles, he said.

"However, if we are going to add permanent members it should not consist of Japan and Germany alone because this will mean the permanent members will be more unbalanced than... now," Mr. Alatas said.

"Therefore, should this happen, at the same time some developing countries should join."

He said criteria should include equitable geographic distribution, political and economic weighting, size of population and a record of contributing to the solution of world problems.

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Flu-ridden Italian president halts crisis talks

ROME (Agencies) — Illness forced President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro to suspend talks on solving Italy's political stalemate Wednesday as speculation grew he may appoint former head of state Francesco Cossiga as prime minister.

Mr. Scalfaro, 76, had been due to meet delegations from all the main political parties Wednesday in a second round of talks aimed at solving a deep political crisis sparked by the resignation of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi on Dec. 22.

But the president's office said the consultations had been suspended because Mr. Scalfaro was suffering from influenza, meaning a further delay in appointing a new prime minister.

The talks had originally been scheduled to end Thursday evening and political commentators had said that Mr. Scalfaro could appoint someone to head Italy's 54th government since World War II by the weekend.

The heads of Italy's two houses of parliament had talks with Mr. Scalfaro Tuesday evening and both expressed optimism that there would be a relatively swift end to the turmoil.

"The crisis is sorting itself out, the skies are growing lighter," said Lower house

leader Irene Pivetti.

Mr. Berlusconi resigned after the federalist Northern League party pulled out of his seven-month-old coalition last month.

The outgoing prime minister and his allies are demanding fresh elections with Mr. Berlusconi proposing March 26 as a date — exactly a year after Italians last voted in general elections.

But the League and opposition centrist and leftist parties say that a broad-based transitional government is required to pass electoral and institutional reform before Italians return to the ballot box.

Mr. Scalfaro, arbiter in the crisis, has the difficult job of plotting a way out of the maze.

The president has said that he must be guided by the constitution and cannot dissolve parliament as a majority of its members oppose such a move.

Commentators suggested the outspoken Cossiga, Mr. Scalfaro's predecessor as president, had emerged as favourite to lead a transitional government.

They said the silver-haired Sardinian was combative enough to cope with parliamentary ambushes from

Mr. Berlusconi and his allies in the Freedom Alliance. Mr. Cossiga is on good terms with many members of the Alliance.

But Clemente Mastella, labour minister in the Berlusconi government, said Mr. Cossiga was not interested in the job.

"We've just had a meeting with Cossiga... he has no intention of being part of a game in which there can be no winners," said Mr. Mastella of the small Christian Democratic Centre Party.

Other candidates for the job include Treasury Minister Lamberto Dini, a non-partisan figure who enjoys the backing of the Freedom Alliance. But his chances have been hurt by the Alliance's insistence on early elections.

Economist Mario Monti, a newly appointed European Union commissioner, is the choice of Northern League leader Umberto Bossi while centrist Mario Segni has proposed Antonio Di Pietro, the former judge who spearheaded Italy's war on graft.

Any new governing coalition formed to avert snap Italian elections must be headed by Mr. Berlusconi, senior politicians allied with

the outgoing premier said Tuesday, ruling out any compromise on an alternative administration.

The supporters said in a statement that Mr. Berlusconi is the "only leader" from within the coalition led by his Forza Italia party that took power after March elections "who can legitimately head a new government enjoying a parliamentary majority."

If such a majority could not be formed, elections "within a short timeframe" are the "obligatory solution" to Italy's current political stalemate.

In such a case, Mr. Berlusconi would be prepared to back the formation of an "electoral government" headed by a different leader from within the depleted right-wing coalition, they said.

Although uncompromising in broad terms, the declaration marked a slight softening of the stance of the Berlusconi camp, which had previously insisted on "immediate" polls.

It came at the end of a summit of leaders of Forza Italia, National Alliance and the small Christian Democratic Centre, convened to thrash out a common stand ahead of a planned meeting with President Scalfaro.

Bosnia ceasefire marred by fighting in Bihac enclave

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — U.N. peacekeepers said on Wednesday fighting in the Bosnian enclave of Bihac marred the country's new ceasefire on the eve of a meeting of major powers to discuss how the truce might further the peace process.

The four-month ceasefire between Muslim-led government and Bosnian Serb forces which began on New Year's Day has slowed fighting everywhere but in the northwest enclave of Bihac.

The U.N. reported heavy shelling in the north of the Bihac enclave near Velika Kladusa Tuesday. Some 300 artillery and mortar explosions landed in the vicinity of the town with more overnight, U.N. spokesman Hervé Goumellon told Reuters.

The United Nations has blamed rebel Serbs from the Krajina region in Croatia and renegade Muslim allies for clashes with Bosnian government forces but said there was little they could do as the rebel elements were not signatories to the truce.

Diplomats from the five-nation "contact group" on Bosnia, — the United States, Russia, Britain, France and Germany — planned to hold talks in Bonn Thursday to build on the new truce to press for a negotiated settlement of the war, the German

Foreign Ministry said.

It said the basis for the talks would be the peace plan drawn up last July and accepted by all parties to the conflict except the Bosnian Serbs.

The meeting will discuss "which steps can be taken to continue the efforts towards a political peace settlement against the background of the ceasefire agreed for Bosnia-Herzegovina," the Foreign Ministry said.

Since the latest truce was proposed in a peace mission by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, diplomats say the major powers appear to have shifted their stance to accommodate Serb demands.

A statement last week by the contact group welcoming the truce cautiously referred to its peace plan as a "starting point" instead of a fixed proposal which they had presented as an ultimatum earlier this year.

Leaders of the Bosnian Serbs and the Muslim-led government, the main warring factions in Bosnia, were due to hold U.N.-mediated talks at Sarajevo Airport to discuss the detailed implementation of the four-month truce accord.

U.N. commander Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose and U.N. civil affairs chief Viktor Andrejev

planned to meet Serb and Bosnian army officers for talks on establishing a zone of separation between the two armies and other key elements of the truce.

The truce accord was signed after U.N. shuttle diplomacy persuaded the Bosnian government not to insist on peace in Bihac and the Serbs on a government army pullout from Mount Igman overlooking Sarajevo as firm preconditions for the agreement.

But Muslim-led army forces were expected to carry out a pledge to withdraw an estimated 250 soldiers from the demilitarised mountain zone, a U.N. spokesman said.

U.N. troops would inspect the demilitarised zone Wednesday to begin verifying that all government troops had left. In return, the Serbs were expected to reopen some roads into Sarajevo for civilian traffic this week.

Sarajevo residents got a boost Tuesday when the airport reopened and tram services halted by Serb snipers resumed.

The airport, the main aid gateway for Sarajevo's 380,000 residents, had been closed Saturday after a U.N. cargo aircraft skidded into a mudbank after landing in snowy weather.

Meanwhile the co-presidents of the Geneva conference on former Yugoslavia Wednesday discussed with Croatian officials and secessionist Serbs how to revamp the infrastructure between Croatia and its separatist Krajina region, Zagreb Radio said.

The talks were focused on the implementation of the Dec. 2 accord in which the Croatian government and the separatists committed themselves to reopening communication lines, water and electricity mains and an oil pipeline.

Lord Owen who represents the European Union said the implementation of the agreement was key to resolving the separatist conflict in Croatia.

Lord Owen and the United Nations Thorvald Stoltenberg first met with Hrvoje Sarinic, cabinet chief of Croatian President Franjo Tudjman.

The three later held talks at Zagreb Airport with the Croat Serb "Prime Minister" Borislav Mikelic.

Lord Owen and Mr. Stoltenberg had met with Croat Serb leaders Monday at Knin, the main city of Croatia's separatist-controlled Krajina region.

The two mediators then briefed Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade Tuesday.

Republicans take hard line in Whitewater report

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. Senate banking committee issued its report Tuesday on last year's Whitewater hearings, with Republicans vowing further investigation into the failed real estate deal which has dogged the administration of President Bill Clinton.

The Republican minority said there was "a good possibility" that the president and Mrs. Clinton got confidential information about a government investigation into an Arkansas savings and loan (SL) institution that involved them.

Hearings by both the Senate and the House of Representatives Banking Committee

looked into questionable contacts between White House and U.S. Treasury Department officials about the investigation.

The Senate panel also investigated the suicide in July 1993 of White House deputy counsel Vincent Foster.

Senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York, the committee's incoming Republican chairman, said Republicans wanted to know what had been talked about at an October 1993 meeting between Mr. Clinton and Jim Guy Tucker, his successor as Arkansas governor who was also a figure in the investigation.

In hearings last summer,

both the Senate and House committees looked into contacts between the Treasury Department and White House on an investigation into the Madison SL institution by the Resolution Trust Corp, the SL clean-up body that is under U.S. Treasury authority.

Madison was headed by James McDougal, a friend of the Clintons and their partner in the money-losing Whitewater holiday development in Arkansas. Madison collapsed, costing nearly \$50 million.

Both the Clintons and Mr. Tucker were named in "criminal referrals" on Madison by the RTC.

The Republican report rejected the rationale offered at the hearings that the White House needed to know of the criminal referrals so it could be ready to deal with press questions.

"The 'press leak' rationale does not justify the disclosure to the White House of the existence and details of criminal referrals that mention the president and Mrs. Clinton," the report said.

It also rejected as "obviously spurious" an argument that the White House counsel needed the information to protect the president from meetings which could later be embarrassing.

Bangladesh opposition announces fresh protests

DHAKA (AFP) — Bangladesh opposition groups Wednesday unveiled fresh protest plans after a third day of general strikes ended without any sign of the government giving in to demands to stand down.

The new protests will begin Jan. 11 and climax on Jan. 19 with an attempt to impose a nationwide road and railway blockade, according to the major parties opposing Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

The plans were announced at separate rallies organised by the Awami League of Sheikh Hasina Wajed, the Jatiya Party of deposed President Hussain Mohammad Ershad and the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami party.

Leaders at the rallies called on Mr. Zia to dissolve parliament and summon fresh elections under a caretaker administration. They repeated their rejection of Mr. Zia's offer to stand down 30 days

ahead of elections due in 1996.

Thousands of police and para-military forces were again on the streets for the third eight-hour stoppage. They chased pickets throwing firecrackers but the most serious incident reported was the burning of a motorcycle by strikers.

In temperatures down to a near record low of six degrees Celsius (43 Fahrenheit), stranded commuters were

able to get to work on rickshaws. And though schools and businesses remained shut, government offices and banks worked with staff.

Witnesses said six people were detained and opposition sources said seven activists were hurt by police baton charges. But Dhaka's main hospital reported no arrivals during the strike.

The opposition threatened to intensify street protests unless Mr. Zia calls elections.

Republicans take charge in Congress

WASHINGTON (R) — After 40 years in the political wilderness, Republicans take control of the U.S. Congress promising dramatic action on a host of legislation to reduce taxes, cut the size of government and balance the budget.

Amid pomp, circumstance and parties usually reserved for a presidential inaugural, Georgia lawmaker Newt Gingrich will be elected speaker of the House of Representatives and Republicans will immediately begin a series of votes on his sweeping legislative platform, the so-called "Contract with America."

"It's overwhelming, everything from having to take charge of the House itself... to coordinating with the Senate," Mr. Gingrich said Tuesday as he headed to a meeting with incoming Senate majority leader Bob Dole of Kansas.

Mr. Gingrich, a brash conservative who battled the entrenched Democratic majority for years, was slated to attend two Republican galas and a special prayer service before his formal election as speaker.

"Tomorrow's not just another day. And this is not just another Congress," trumpeted a full-page ad by the Republican National Committee in Tuesday's USA Today newspaper.

When the gavel bang in the House and Senate at noon, Republicans will be in control of both chambers for the first time in 40 years, after elections last November that gave them sweeping victories over President Bill Clinton's Democrats.

The focus will be on the House, where Mr. Gingrich has led his party in promising a 100-day legislative blitz to fulfil promises made in his contract with America, a document that establishes positions on issues ranging from welfare to taxes.

Much of day one — which could drag into the wee hours of Thursday — will be taken up by debate and votes on eight internal reforms including making the House subject to the same federal work rules that apply to the rest of the country.

Republican Conference Chairman John Boehner of Ohio said this reform is likely

to lead to second thoughts about some laws Congress has imposed on the private sector — such as fair labour standards — but from which it has been exempt.

Other opening-day reforms to be voted on by the House include reducing committee staffs by one-third, authorising a comprehensive audit of the House books, limiting the terms of committee chairman and the speaker and requiring a three-fifths majority to increase income tax rates.

Beyond internal reforms, the Republican contract calls for votes in the first 100 days on cutting taxes, a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced budget, reforming welfare, strengthening defence, overhauling product liability laws, toughening a crime bill passed last year and limiting the number of terms members of Congress may serve.

Democrats downplayed the reforms, pointing out that the House passed legislation in 1994 applying laws to Congress.

Taking aim at Mr. Gingrich, Democrats will offer a proposal to bar lawmakers from accepting gifts from lobbyists and limiting royalties from book deals to a third of a legislator's salary.

Mr. Gingrich came under fire last month for agreeing to a \$4.5 million advance for writing two books. After public outcry, he said, he would take only a \$1 advance but would take royalties.

"It's very important we say to the American people no more special-interest undue influence in the legislative process," said Democratic leader Dick Gephardt of Missouri.

In the Senate, the change is less cataclysmic. Republicans last held a majority there from 1981 to 1987 during Ronald Reagan's era, and Sen. Dole will resume the majority leader's post he held during the last two of those years.

Sen. Dole is promising action on some of the House contract bills, but the Senate moves more slowly and the rules give the minority a bigger voice than in the House.

Senate Democrats sought to place their own imprint on the new Congress, as incoming Democratic leader Thomas Daschle warned Republicans against veering too far to the right.

"Republicans have been given a chance, not a mandate" to solve the nation's problems," Sen. Daschle of South Dakota said at a news conference as he held out the prospect of a partnership between the parties.

Gingrich mother says son thinks Hillary is a 'bitch'

NEW YORK (R) — The mother of incoming and outspoken U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich says in a television interview that her son thinks first lady Hillary Clinton is "a bitch."

The comment by Kathleen Gingrich, who calls her son "lovable" in a CBS interview, seems likely to cause a new uproar between the White House and Republicans who take over the U.S. Congress for the first time in 40 years Wednesday.

The two sides have already been at odds over Mr. Gingrich's claim that a large percentage of White House staff took drugs in the past five years and allegations by North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms that the military deports President Bill Clinton.

In the interview to be shown Thursday on CBS' TV's Eye To Eye With Conne Chung, Ms. Chung asks Mrs. Gingrich, 68, what her son told her about President Clinton. She answered: "The only thing he ever told me is that he's smart. That he's an intelligent man. That he's not very practical, but he's intelligent."

Then Mrs. Gingrich added: "I can't tell you what he said about Hillary," according to

a transcript released by CBS. Ms. Chung then said, "You can't?" and Mrs. Gingrich replied: "I can't."

But Ms. Chung persisted and said: "Why don't you just whisper it to me, just between you and me."

Mrs. Gingrich replied: "She's a bitch, about the only thing he ever said about her. I think they had some meeting you know and she takes over... but with Newt there, she can't."

Mrs. Gingrich went on to say her son could become president "if he wants it."

Asked to describe who her son is, Mrs. Gingrich said: "My boy Newt, that's who Newt Gingrich is, reliable, dedicated, works hard. He's just lovable. TV was made for Newt."

Candace Gingrich, Newt's stepmother who is gay, was less than adoring about him, saying she wasn't sure she could vote for him.

Asked if her being a lesbian was a source of friction between her and her staunchly conservative step-brother, she said: "We've never actually spoken with each other about it... He's probably more embarrassed that I'm a Democrat, if anything."

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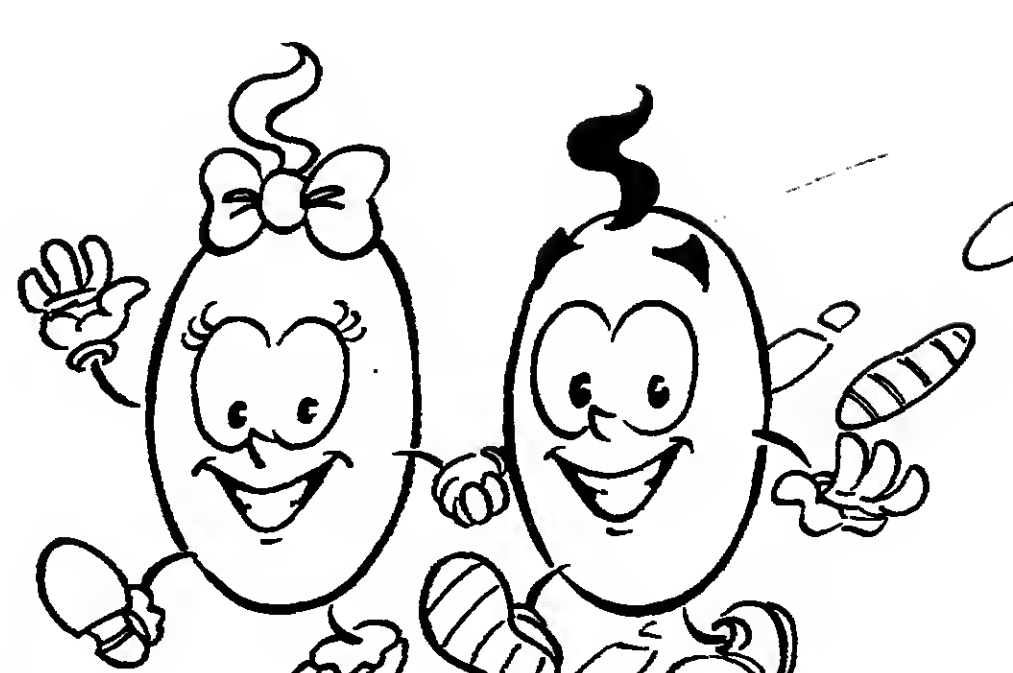
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Good management is essential to promote culture and arts

By Mohammad Mashariqa

I was fortunate enough to participate in a workshop entitled "Management of Culture and Arts" organised in the past two weeks by the British Council Centre in Jerusalem.

The participants were directors of theatres, galleries and arts centres in Palestine. However Egyptian intellectuals and artists invited to take part in the meetings have declined to attend although the discussions had nothing to do with politics.

I had hoped I would not be the only participant from Jordan because the subjects on the agenda were actually of great importance and could benefit a large group of Jordanian artists and writers.

The workshop has indeed given me the opportunity to closely examine the Palestinian cultural and artistic situation under Israeli occupation and to inspect those political and cultural influences that have their impact on the cultural and economic life in Palestine.

I came away from that workshop with the conviction that we in Jordan have to give due attention to the management of culture and arts since only through appropriate and efficient management can arts and culture be developed.

Artists ought to learn rules for not only planning art work but also marketing them and for the need to

enhance artists contacts and links with the local communities with the purpose of creating a constant audience of theatre-goers and gallery visitors.

I am now convinced of the importance of creating an umbrella for the artistic groups, designed to facilitate promoting artistic work, and marketing it and of the need to have a centre for documenting artistic work for the benefit of the new artists.

One of the lecturers advocated the cause of creating a department in Arab universities to train students in the management of cultural and artistic

AMMAN CULTURAL PULSE

work, arguing that through this plan Arab states can give real boost to artistic work. The lecturer also underlined the need for an artist to sacrifice his creative work to specialise mainly in management of artwork.

To achieve this, he said, it was necessary to separate management of artwork from creativity and creative artistic work in order to pool the work of managers and artists, thus avoiding issues related to financial or marketing considerations.

The other aspect of the workshop concerned the future cultural relations between Israel and the Palestinians. That was indeed a hard topic because of

the religious and nationalistic considerations and ideologies which are still influencing the Arab mind.

But I am convinced now that without the emergence of a strong group inside Israel that really believes in and supports the peaceful coexistence between Arabs and Jews, it would be almost impossible to secure stability in the region.

This is my personal conviction after attending the workshop which enhanced my idea and belief that artists and intellectuals on both sides can bridge the gap between the two peoples and can pave the way for peaceful co-existence.

Indeed, I believe that the cycle of violence can never vanish without a full openness on the part of social and civic institutions in Israel and Palestine to one another. I have felt that there is real desire on the part of both sides to have security, peace, stability and progress in every domain, but that apprehension and fear for personal safety have to date prevented such objectives to be attained.

I can safely say that there can be no way for peace except through full normalisation and I believe that artists and intellectuals are the most eligible people to influence their respective sides and attain the aspired co-existence and stability.

An Israeli artist confided that he knows no Palestinian artist nor is he acquainted with Palesti-

nian works of art although Arab artists could be living a 10-minute walk from his house. He said he feared for his life if he tried to approach the Arab artists. A Palestinian artist shared the same view and added that his movements between East and West Jerusalem are restricted and he is always subject to inspection by the troops.

I have noticed through this workshop that intellectuals from Palestine are separated culturally from those on the east bank of Jordan because of political considerations. Therefore there is a general feeling on the West Bank that unity between the Palestinians and the Jordanians is far-fetched and a mere wishful thinking.

Novelist Yahya Yakhlef told me the time has come for Jordanian intellectuals, artists and writers to express full solidarity with the Palestinian brothers. Yakhlef, who serves as assistant minister of culture in the self-rule areas of Palestine, said that there was need for bolstering joint cultural and artistic work and also for building personal relationships.

In conclusion, I can say that peace and stability require hard, intensive and relentless work and perseverance on the part of both the Arabs and Israelis and require a great deal of courage on both sides, so that they can advance towards a better future for the coming generations.

SOCIETY ON THE MOVE

Chechenya under the dome: aim is to liquidate 'fiery' team?

Insisting that Jordan should take more practical steps to show solidarity with the Muslim people of Chechenya, Islamic Action Front Deputy Abdul Munem Abu Zant (Amman) in yesterday's Lower House session proposed that the assembly form a special committee to deal with the problem in that part of the world. Sheikh Abu Zant's proposal led to a somewhat heated debate about the Kingdom's position on the conflict in the Caucasus republic. Other proposals came to counter his in the heat of the debate which saw Deputy Toujan Faisal (Amman) launch a strong attack on the government. The House eventually voted down Sheikh Abu Zant's proposal and adopted another one to refer the issue to the Foreign Affairs Committee. But lawmakers did not take a vote on the only proposal that made the deputies laugh from their hearts. It was a motion by Deputy Mohammad Dawoudiyeh (Tafilah) to send a fact-finding mission consisting of deputies Abu Zant, Faisal (who is Circassian) and Abdul Baqi Jammoh (Chechen from Zarqa) to the besieged Chechen capital, Grozny. Why did the House not take a vote on Mr. Dawoudiyeh's proposal? Because, in the words of Deputy Bassam Haddadin (Zarqa), the mission he proposed was more of an attempt at "liquidating" the fiery team than a fact-finding tour.

OF TABLOIDS AND SCOOPS: Many journalists go to extreme lengths to scoop their competitors, as the case is all over the world. Not many, however, will go as far as the Al Bilad weekly as a recent report by it shows. In a recent edition, Al Bilad carried a detailed account of a meeting it said brought together HRH Crown Prince Hassan with representatives of the Islamic movement in the Kingdom. The paper gave details of what was said in the meeting as well as its mood. As it turned out, the story was not only inaccurate, but also totally untrue. Why, because the meeting had not taken place when the weekly tabloid printed its report. Al Bilad apparently acted on a tip that the Crown Prince was going to meet with Islamists. So when the expected date of the meeting passed and no news about it reached the press, Al Bilad must have assumed that nobody wanted to talk about it. The choice, it seems, was between giving up on a big scoop or acting on an editor's hunch that the meeting took place. Obviously the paper opted for the latter and wrote the report based on its expectations of what could have been said during it. Some professional journalism for you. Our advice is: See the Jordan Times' front page for real coverage of events from now on.

NEW YEAR? HOW AND WHERE?: As 1994 was wrapping up, the big question (other than what was going to happen with the Cabinet) was where to spend New Year's eve. There were invitations to private parties (even one with a "cowboys and Indians" theme and the annual "come as you are, come anytime," bash hosted by others). But by Al Aswaq Arabic daily's estimate in its Monday edition, more people opted for private gatherings at home or at public facilities. Thus, Al Aswaq concluded, there were probably fewer "incidents and problems" owing to "harassment and overdrinking" at the hospitality and eatery establishments than in previous years. But most sales managers and restaurateurs the newspaper spoke to said their counts for that night were excellent, and apart from the usual few "incidents" and some gatecrashers, the evening-till-dawn celebrations went rather smoothly. Some hoteliers even admitted to running their own short reconnaissance missions to see how their competitors were doing.

MARRIOTT HOTEL officials could not be more pleased, according to Business Travel Sales Manager Ibrahim Salman. First the hotel's ballroom was booked as it usually is for the American University of Beirut (AUB) annual end of the year affair. Also in its Sports Bar another group hosted a private party. The hotel's Al Mansaf and Al Walima restaurants served dinner to 120 and 60 people respectively. And New Year's Day breakfast, "the most popular in town," says Salman, was served from about sunrise to 7:00 a.m. to 700 people. The night went off without a hitch, Salman maintains.

THE REGENCY PALACE, a few blocks away, Sales Manager Ghaleb Sawalha said the evening at the hotel's rooftop nightclub was a great success, complete with a band, a singer and a dancer.

THE PHILADELPHIA HOTEL was bursting at the seams with New Year festivities, according to its Sales Manager Nader Amr. With six parties (two of them private) the staff at the hotel, which is "known for having some of the best parties in town," had their hands full. The Royal Ballroom seated 1,100 guests who came to dine and hear Egyptian singer Mustafa Qamar. At the Philadelphia Ballroom, Iraqi singer Mahmoud Anwar entertained 400 revelers. And a confirmed 250 (but an estimated show of about 300) "yuppies" and Royal Jordanian flight attendants crowded the Coffee Shop to stomp to the popular rock of the Dead Sea Fishing Club. Fifty staff members of the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) filled a room for their own celebration. And 250 members and friends of the Children's International Summer Villages Society attended the new organisation's year-end affair. By about 11:00 p.m., local singers Adel Al Haj and Suhair Odeh, who had organised a party of 100, made their way, accompanied by their group, into the other parties. Most of the celebrations ended at 3:00 a.m., but the Royal Ballroom crowd carried on till 5:00 a.m.

EATERIES ON THE RUN: Restaurants too, were said to have done well. One half of the seating at **LACQUETTE** was reserved for a party of 27 made up of an eclectic group of young professionals. The other half filled up with smaller groups for dinner and live musical entertainment. At **TURINO** "Flat-Otel" waiters were busy attending to three "packed" parties in the establishment's Vis-a-Vis Disco Restaurant, Turino Restaurant and Cheers Café. According to restaurant Manager Amar Sheikhhan, the revelers danced to the music of Tigers Band and singer Amer Khufash and only started for home about 4:00 a.m. The gala "masquerade" dinner at **ROZENA** Restaurant was the creation of Manager Ernest Liniger. His guests on New Year's Eve were an "elegant" mix of small groups and five tables-for-two, who dined on a five-course gourmet menu including lobster thermidor and filet wellington. Dancing to the selections of a "class act," Rozena guests went home happy by 2:00 a.m., said Liniger. And for those who stayed up till dawn and beyond, popular pizza parlour **MILANO** was serving Manaish till 6:00 a.m.

CALCULATIONS BLURRED BY...: Al Aswaq gave no headcount figures to support its claims that low turn-outs at the year-end affairs were attributable to "a rise in charges and a drop in the quality of food and service." We wonder who in the industry they spoke to. Judging from the figures the J.T. obtained, and the sober comments of hotel and restaurant patrons, a good time was had by all. The hospitality industry thus takes their successful evening as a sign of things to come in '95.

THE COMMON 'Z' DENOMINATOR: If the entertainment industry could only follow suit, and equitably determine what its audience would like to see and hear, many more sectors would look to a bright mid-decade.

Right about the end of the year, when many of us were deciding on, or at least thinking about, New Year's resolutions, we received a letter to the editor which was directed to the attention of "Jordan Television-Channel 2." We thought the message of its author, Al Ghazarian, might be a timely catalyst for programme directors and producers at Jordan Radio and Television Corporation to take the opportunity of the unfolding of 1995, "bite the bullet" and really make headway in the country's broadcast arena. Ghazarian, proud and seemingly quite progressive father of two girls, was most disturbed, as you will read, about the cancelling of popular DJ Muhammad Al Jazireh's Tuesday TV special "Da Beat's On." Here is how Ghazarian saw it: "This letter will be short and to the point. You have proven to be unprofessional in your decision-making. Is it a habit destroying talent once you have it? This seems to be the case with Da Beat's On. You can not deny the fact that this show was so popular that it's following made waves not only in Jordan but across the borders

to Israel and the Gulf. Everybody talked about it. Many people loved it, especially school kids and the new generation (Generation X). You can ask my daughters. What justification do you have for cancelling it. Could it be because of some dirty foul play within your TV station, or maybe someone from outside did not like the presenter. Well, everything is possible in this small town. Though rumour has it that someone at JTV cancelled it for personal reasons, another says that someone else in JTV has a grudge against Mr. Al Jazireh. As I said, this is a small town. News travels like a bullet. Let the record show that Muhammad Al Jazireh is Jordan's top radio DJ and probably one of the best to have ever come to the tube and radio. Unfortunately, Jordan TV is a classic case of sadism. Once people like something—cancel it. Let's torture them guys. After all, we have nothing else to do. Questions: Why does Jordan TV cancel popular shows? Answer: Because people like them. Just a thought for your (professional) decision making."

According to JTV sources, the show, which went on the air in October 1993, was cancelled last May after the station received a faxed copy of an article in Al Sabeel, which is the Muslim Brotherhood's official gazette, objecting to the content of some of the songs featured in the programme. A follow-up phone call to the producers complaining that the programme was "too loose," turned out to be the



Mohammad Al Jazireh

show's death sentence. What a story to believe? If there is more to it, we promise to let you know.

Jennifer Hamarneh

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BRITISH AIRWAYS
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A wireless world

By Jean-Claude Elias

Let's face it. Cables are ugly. If your personal computer (PC) has a standard configuration that would include a monitor, a keyboard, a printer, a sound card, a fax/modem card and naturally a mouse, you're already looking at approximately 12 cables, un-aesthetically tangled behind your desk. If your setup includes additional hardware like a scanner, a removable data storage device, a joystick and a MIDI (Music Instrument Digital Interface), the number of cables can easily reach 20 or 30.

Most external units require two cables to operate, the power cable that supplies the electric current and the data cable that channels the flow of information to and from the computer.

The mouse and the keyboard need only one cable that fulfills both functions. Other devices use several wires — the sound card for instance has 3 plugs: one for the microphone, one for line output and one for line input.

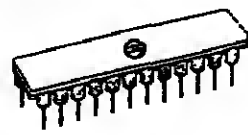
If you are of the tidy kind and have taken care to untangle the web, maybe by separating the wires in functional groups, power cables on one side and data cables on the other, keeping them together with special fasteners, the back of your desk may appear less painful to look at. Still, every PC user wishes one day that one or two cables are enough to do all the job.

Wireless communications have existed for decades now, the most universally known and widespread ones being the radio and TV. In the last 20 or 15 years, the number of wireless devices, whether for professional or consumer use, on a small or a wide scale, has gone mushrooming. TV and hi-fi remote controls, wireless home phones, cellular phones, pagers, satellite communications, wireless microphones and headphones, walkie-talkies, ... the list is endless.

A distinction should be made between the devices that use temporary, or "spot" transmission — most remote controls — and those that need to be transmitting continuously — satellites, TV, and others. Notwithstanding technical details, all systems work on a certain frequency of the available electromagnetic waves spectrum, on which they transmit and receive. The most advanced ones — the cellular phones — function on an assigned, optimised frequency that may automatically change, in order to free the band for other users, based on "time and place" criteria. The result, in any case, is overcrowded skies.

It was therefore only normal that computer designers started to think of cableless systems. However,

chip talk



the speed at which computer data is shuttled, its volume and the required level of accuracy all make such devices rather expensive, when compared to the price of regular items. There is no room here for a compromise. By comparison, an amateur, FM (Frequency Modulation) wireless microphone system can be purchased for as little as 20 JD. A professional unit on the other hand can cost as much as 1,200 JD. In the computer field, only high quality equipment could be used. Alas it would be too expensive for the time being. It may cost as much as the PC itself.

Cordless mice and keyboards are available. They work in the infra-red range of the waves spectrum. Though reasonably priced, they have not become particularly popular yet. Other products are appearing all the time: wireless speakers for the sound cards, wireless network connections and wireless MIDI interfaces. Although clearly annoyed by messy cables, users seem to trust them more than expensive, esoteric cordless systems. Reliability is sought before anything else. Cables also make maintenance easier.

PC users seem reluctant to increase the traffic on the already congested air waves. Even though there are clear international conventions on sharing the air waves, mainly by assigning parts of the spectrum (HF, VHF, UHF, etc...) for different purposes (TV, radio, telephones, police, ...) and limiting the allowed transmission power (therefore distances), computer users do not find it necessary to enter this complex system. Except in the case of LANs (Local Area Networks) where the benefits would be obvious, personal computing, for the time being at least, will be just fine with all these "spaghetti" cabling around.

Manufacturers could however alleviate the pain in a simple way, without the need for wireless devices, by integrating more and more options inside the main PC cabinet. For these components, no external wires would be necessary. Such a solution would be both elegant and inexpensive. The most striking example is Apple's new screens with built-in stereo speakers. An example to follow.

Leaving behind the culturally insignificant

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaceen

Reflection is a pointless and misery-inducing option that only makes you aware of how quickly the years are passing. But these days seem to be the only time that one has to reflect on the fact that everyone is, in a way, a year older; a year has gone and another has just come up.

And in adulthood, although dreams of the just and perfect can remain as strong as they were in adolescence, there is also generated the capacity to explore and care about specific new things or situations not part of that ideal vision. This is the freedom of adulthood: the capacity to absorb new and perhaps painful meanings, the willingness to get involved in situations one cannot securely control.

While a community is a particular kind of social group in which men and women believe that they share something together, and while affluence has given our community new tools to define itself, the affluent society of the last few years has shown that the received notion of community — the pleasure in recognising "us" and "who we are" — have become a way for people to hide from each other. The products of this hiding have been slavery and indifference.

In place of the communal bonds people have

experienced, a different adult society has taken form. Care between individuals now exists only to the extent that mutual curiosity and specific bonds are developing. There can be no expectation of human love, no community of affection, warm and comforting, laid down for the society as a whole. Human bonds are fragmented and limited to specific and individual encounters. Only a truly chaotic and modern urban life can challenge the slavery patterns of adolescence so that large numbers of young people have the opportunity for growth now accorded only to a few.

But the "modern" is not something we must indiscriminately consume: it is not a unitary concept. It is not something which one can be for or against. It is neither a threat or a poison because it is not one thing. It is many things, good and bad. It pushes us in two quite distinct directions towards characterless trash and towards something better, freer, funnier and faster. One thing, however, the modern always does is offer us more. There are always new things to buy or to use. Technology and wealth will, in the absence of global catastrophe, continue to grow. The trick is to deal with this tide by being rich and smart, to know the difference between sushi and hamburger, between class and trash. Maybe we can begin to learn this trick in 1995.

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, Jan. 5

7:30 N.B.A.

8:30 Road To Avonlea

Sara and Aunt Olivia team up while trying to regain the lost treasure to its rightful owner.

9:10 The Hat Squad

Raffi and the rest of the Hat Squad go in pursuit of a gang that specialises in armoured car heists.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — Skylark

Starring: Glenn Close & Christopher Walken

The film tells the unique story of a mail-order bride from Maine who finds a challenging new life on the Kansas prairie.

11:10 The Exile

An attempt to nail down an underworld businessman after being charged with blackmail and murder.

Friday, Jan. 6

7:30 Hollywood Stuntmakers

8:30 African Skies

While considering to donate the tobacco farm to the government, Sam is met with anger from the villagers nearby as the closing of the farm would mean unemployment for many of the locals.

8:30 You Bet Your Life

9:00 P.M. Magazine

9:30 Heart Of Courage

10:00 News In English

10:20 Blanche

Drawn by the bonds of kinship, Blanche sets out for the rugged region of Abitibi to find the father she knows so little about and who has chosen to live in exile.

11:10 Never The Twain

Saturday, Jan. 7

7:30 Harry And The Hendersons

8:00 Innovation

Challenges of living under water and a focus on mineral resources buried in the depths of oceans and great seas.

8:30 Quantum Leap

9:10 Murder She Wrote

A fire breaks out in the house of a renowned pianist whose wife is later murdered by a gunshot.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Frauds

Starring: Phil Collins & Hugo Weaving

On the roll of a stained ivory dice, the fate of a guilty young couple who took a chance on the lure of early insurance money, will be decided.

11:10 Major Dad

A gorgeous and playful newcomer creates chaos inside the headquarters as she puts a spell on the Major.

Sunday, Jan. 8

7:30 Galactica

8:15 The Album Show

9:00 Hidden Room

9:30 Heartbeat

10:00 News In English

10:20 One Woman's Courage

Starring: Patty Duke & James Farentino

The life of an old woman turns to a nightmare as she becomes the only eye-witness to a murder in which a black lady gets killed in the middle of the road.

12:00 The Upper Hand

A celebration turns to a tragic scene after a patient is taken to the hospital.

Monday, Jan. 9

7:30 Black Beauty

8:00 Boogies Diner

8:30 Street Hawk

A girl gets kidnapped after her father refuses to respond to blackmail.

9:10 Shades Of L.A.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Flight Into Hell

Tuesday, Jan. 10

7:30 Practical Guide To The Universe

8:00 The Detectives

Two detectives are assigned on a mission to guard a monk who is an important murder witness.

8:30 The Law And Harry McGraw

9:10 Equinox

10:00 News In English

10:20 WED Palms

Set sometime in the near future in Los Angeles, Wild Palms is a mind-bending mixture of horrifying drama, deadpan realism and hallucinatory soap opera.

11:10 Piglet Files

There's a case of mistaken identity when a Russian hitman looking for Patrick Clapton is handed a photograph of Peter Chapman, who finds himself a hunted man.

Wednesday, Jan. 11

7:30 Home Improvement

Tim helps his wife in the house work while she prepares to delivering a speech before a big audience.

8:00 Life In The Freezer

8:30 Quantum Leap

9:10 Law And Order

10:00 News In English

10:20 Snowy River

Matt is in Melbourne to fight a land act that is putting all the small farm holders out of business.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shaqir

ARABIC PROVERBS EXPLAINED

★ A bachelor for life rather than a widower for a month.

TRANSLITERATION: Azzab dahr wala arnah shahr.

MEANING: A bachelor's life is much more comfortable if compared to a widower's, particularly after the loss of his wife.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

★ "Beware of evil that may come from one whom you helped."

TRANSLITERATION: It'taqi sharra man ahsanta elayhe.

MEANING: Beware of a man who ignores a favour you already did for him.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

★ "Care killed a cat."

TRANSLITERATION: Kathratul hamm toqassir al-ajal.

MEANING: Care shortens life and the avoidance of forgetting them is much better.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

★ "Don't teach your grandmother to suck eggs."

TRANSLITERATION: Akhbar minnak be-youm aaraf minnak be-sana.

MEANING: It is advisable for young people not to worry themselves by giving advice to those who are older than them as they have much more experience in matters of life.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

— He's out of tune. Innahu mutakaddir.
— He's all the talk. Innahu kathirul kalam.
— He's a man of straw. Innahu rajol tafef.
— He's no stranger to us. Innahu sadeequna.
— He's a snake in the grass. Innahu gash'shaash.
— He's a slow coach. Innahu kassol.
— He's slow of apprehension. Innahu qalilul fahm.
— He's a back-biter. Innahu namnam.
— He's jealous and envious. Innahu gayoor wa-haseed.

— He's showing off. Innahu mutakabbir.
— He sees double. Innahu sakran.
— He's at the point of death. Innahu ala shafa hofraten minal mawt.

— He's a deep file. Innahu muh'tal.
— He's a natural fool. Innahu ab'lah.
— He's of low stature. Innahu qassirul qama.
— He commits gross mistakes. Innahu yartakib akhta'a fashisha.

— He's a miserly man. Innahu rajol bakheel.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. How long will grape vines produce?
2. What is a nom de plume?

3. How much does a cricket ball weigh?

4. If two figures coincide when placed one upon the other, what are they called?

5. Why is cognac so called?

YOUR DREAMS INTERPRETED

AWARD: You'll be lucky if you dreamed of receiving or giving an award of any kind. Prosperity is just round the corner.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MEDAL: Wearing medals predicts recognition for work well done; observing medals on others or in a display is a warning to control your vanity and/or your jealousy.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BADGE: Whatever kind of security concerns you most, whether job, social or financial, will be yours if you dreamed of yourself or anyone else wearing a badge.

PUZZLES

(A) LOVEMATCH

Match up the famous lovers from the lists below:

1. Antony and.....

a- Lucrezia Borgia

b- Cleopatra

c- Calpurnia

d- Cecelia

2. Napoleon and.....

a- Marie Antoinette

b- Emma Hamilton

c- Madame Pompadour

d- Josephine

3. Richard Burton and.....

a- Marilyn Monroe

b- Elizabeth Ashley

c- Carole Lombard

d- Elizabeth Taylor

4. Robert Browning and.....

a- Emily Dickinson

b- Elizabeth Barrett

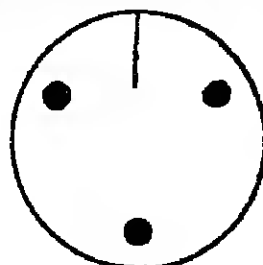
c- Emily Bronte

d- Christina Rossetti

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

(B) CIRCLE LINE

Can you scribe a second, smaller circle inside this figure so that each of the three dots is isolated in its own compartment?



New York restaurant rules put the squeeze on smokers

By Frederic Bichon
Agence France Presse

NEW YORK — The walls are closing in on smokers in New York after the city council approved new rules drastically limiting the number of restaurants where diners can light up.

Critics of the anti-smoking measures are fuming. "Where will it stop?" said Frederick Lesort, a non-smoking French national and owner of

three trendy New York restaurants.

"The next step is prohibition, followed by being forced to offer only low-calorie menus to discourage obesity," he said of the new rules, which effectively ban smoking in all restaurants that seat more than 35 customers.

"It's a Communist mentality," he said. Barring an unforeseen twist of fate, the strict new regulations will become law next month with the

assent of New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who has on several occasions called publicly for stiff anti-smoking measures for the city.

But restaurant and hotel owners, whose livelihood depends largely on the tourism industry, have warned the new measures will undermine the city's economy and will be difficult if not impossible to enforce.

The rules are "a blow to the city's tradition of hos-

pitality," according to a statement released by the United Restaurant, Hotel and Tavern Association, a group set up to fight tough anti-smoking legislation.

The group said the measures would lead to the elimination of 11,000 jobs in New York's hotel and restaurant sector and would cost the city's tourist industry \$500 million in lost revenue in the short term.

The rules, critics say, would also turn restaurant owners into policemen.

"There's no question of me becoming a cop," Mr. Lesort said.

Des O'Brien, owner of Langan's restaurant in the theatre district, echoed the sentiment.

"So many of my customers will have no knowledge of the legislation and no understanding of it either," Mr. O'Brien said. "I will have to tell them what they are doing is

illegal and if they smoke they are no longer welcome in my establishment. Is this the message that the city of New York really wants to send out to tourists?"

Apparently so, based on Health Department instructions for enforcing the rules: the owner of any restaurant seating more than 35 customers who fails to enforce the regulations will face a first-time fine of up to \$200.

That sum will be doubled with each subsequent violation.

Several of the city's most well-known restaurants, including Lutece, Sardi's and the Four Seasons, support the anti-tobacco drive and even restaurant owners such as Mr. Lesort seem resigned to a tighter clampdown on smoking.

"Customers might, at the beginning, go to the smaller restaurants where they can still smoke," Mr.

Lesort said. "But they'll be back."

Philip Morris, the world's largest producer of cigarettes which earlier threatened to move its 2,000-employee office out of New York if the new rules were approved, has since opted for a low profile.

"We're very disappointed," a spokesman for the company said, offering no further comment.

Book on Italian communication catalogues what words can't describe

By Brian Murphy
The Associated Press

ROME — A recipe for trouble in Italy: Make a fist, extend index finger and pinkie, thrust forward and up. A snarl is optional.

The gesture — an insult suggesting an unfaithful wife — is part of the array of hand jabs, facial tics and arm movement that add significance and sentiment to nearly every con-

versation among Italians.

"There are gestures for everything from making love to making dinner. The hands can often say things better than words," said Milan design artist Bruno Munari, who compiled a book illustrating some of the most popular Italian gestures.

Munari's Dictionary Of Italian Gestures contains dozens of examples stretching from early 19th

century Naples to modern signals for a cellular telephone call.

Squeezing your chin between thumb and index finger signifies cuteness. Pulling down slightly on the skin under the right eye with an index finger shows an agreement has been reached. Consider something foolish? Place hands together as if in prayer then lower the pinkies.

Technology added new gestures. The first telephone gesture was a rotating finger, simulating dialing. It was replaced by a push-button movement. Now, with cellular phones widely popular in Italy, the latest phone gesture is a palm pressed to an ear.

"You need to keep up," said Munari.

The idea for the book came when Munari, 87,

was on vacation and joking with a friend about the scope of Italian gestures. A list was started. The vulgar signs were eliminated as well as ones that could be considered offensive, such as a flick of the earlobe to signify homosexuality.

"We were left with the main gestures that have the widest use. You'd need many books to include all the gestures particular to a region or

popular among young people," said Munari, who has written several books on industrial designs.

With gestures, entire conversations could be conducted in silence.

"What do you want?" (fingertips pinched together).

"I'm hungry," (a cutting motion of the hand above the top of the stomach.)

"And something to drink?" (thumb tipped down toward mouth.)

"No, everything fine. By the way, it was delicious," (shake hand with palm down, then stick index finger in cheek and rock side to side.)

Some gestures are obvious in their intent. A threat is a thumb slashing across the neck. I'm angry: curl your index finger and bite down.

Others need translation. Rubbing two index fingers together represents an affair or secret meeting. Tapping your forehead with your fingers means something is too strange to believe.

"A foreigner can come to Italy and learn the language perfectly, but without knowing the gestures you are not really fluent," said Munari. "A lot can be said with no words at all."

A woman who broke the silence

Memoirs From The Women's Prison
By Nawal El Saadawi
Translated from the Arabic by Marilyn Booth
University of California Press
204pp. \$35; paperback \$12.

The Innocence Of The Devil
By Nawal El Saadawi
Translated from the Arabic by Sherif Hitata
University of California Press
233pp. \$20.

NAWAL El Saadawi, a physician, political and literary iconoclast and one of the most widely translated contemporary Egyptian writers, was an outspoken feminist thinker long before women's rights was considered a "legitimate item" on the international human rights agenda.

In these two very different books — one a prison memoir and the other a post-modernist novel of near-poetic density, Saadawi places herself squarely within a tradition of outspoken women who have dared to question the religious as well as the secular foundations of patriarchal authority. In her prison account — the author was jailed along with numerous other Egyptian intellectuals during Anwar Sadat's regime — Saadawi observes that from earliest childhood she never hesitated to engage in disputations with God — "and God had to convince me of what he was saying."

Although she now spends most of her time teaching at American and European universities, in her own land Saadawi is a complicated and controversial figure whose political views have managed to outrage both Islamic fundamentalists and supporters of peace with Israel. Her politics — particularly her opposition to the 1979 Camp David peace treaty between Egypt and Israel — were probably responsible for her imprisonment. (She was released after



Nawal El Saadawi

Sadat's assassination in 1981).

Born in 1931, Saadawi graduated from the University of Cairo Faculty of Medicine in 1955.

Throughout her adult life, she has managed to combine her life as a prolific writer with a career in public health.

Saadawi is most widely known in the West for *The Hidden Face of Eve* (1982), a nonfiction work on women in Arab cultures. However, her reputation in the Arab World is based equally on her political essays, literary criticism and fictional works.

Readers who wish to acquaint themselves with Saadawi's literary artistry should skip *Memoirs From The Women's Prison* and turn directly to her novel. Saadawi's incarceration was too brief — she was released after eight weeks — to yield any original insights into the plight of political prisoners.

Moreover, many Western liberals (including feminists) will be put off by some of the political views Saadawi puts forth in her memoir. In a 1994 postscript, for instance, she suggests that "human rights" has become a slogan for the powerful to use against the weak. "How many nations are there," she asks, "where human rights are violated without anyone revealing these transgressions — certainly they do not appear in international reports — simply because the head of state or the monarch is an obedient follower of the world's great powers?"

During the past decade breaches of human rights — by dictatorships of the left, right and centre — have indeed appeared regularly in current international reports.

If the author were jailed today, news of her fate would be transmitted instantly by the same organisations that helped publicise the plight of Taslima Nasreen, a Bangladeshi feminist who recently fled to Sweden because her "blasphemous" activities had endangered her life in her own country.

But these questions should not and do not impeach the power of the artist whose virtuosity is displayed in her novel *The Innocence Of The Devil*. Set in a mental institution, the novel combines a portrait of women in a patriarchal society with an allegory that

amounts to a heretical argument with God. God and Satan (in earthly incarnations, of course) are both patients.

The narrative moves between reality and fantasy, past and present, and traces intricate relationships among the male beings, the institution's head nurse and two women patients. One of the patients, Ganat (in Arabic, the plural of paradise), had known the nurse, Narguiss, in an intense youthful friendship.

Each of the women — and the devil — has been victimised by a society in which theological and civil authority form a unified patriarchy. Although the institutionalised devil is a man, it is crucial to understand that Islam, like Christianity and Judaism, has a long tradition (rejected by liberal theologians) linking Satan with the weak and impure female body.

The head nurse, Narguiss, who has tried to bury her memories by serving the system, recalls an old argument between her parents. Her father insists that God forgave only Adam — not Eve — for their disobedience. The deity uses plural pronouns when he speaks of original sin but shifts to the singular form in absolving Adam.

"God had a deep knowledge of language and its rules," Narguiss remembers. "He would never use the singular or the dual except in the right context... (Guilt grew under her ribs like a swelling in her flesh. She had to live this sin. No atonement could be made, no words of forgiveness could come from God.)"

One great virtue of this novel is that American readers will be forced to refer to passages on the Creation and Fall from Christian and Jewish Bibles as well as the Koran. Saadawi's discourse with God rests on her own mastery of sacred texts, so it is hardly surprising — indeed, it is an author's prerogative — that God never gets the better of the argument — *The Washington Post*.

Susan Jacoby

Syria's Peasantry in Retrospect

Fragments Of Memory: A Story Of A Syrian Family
By Hanna Mina

180 pages, \$9.95, published by the Centre for Middle East Studies of the University of Texas at Austin, 1993

To many people, the name Syria evokes images of ancient walled cities, colourful markets and renowned restaurants, as found in Damascus or Aleppo. Such is the Syria depicted in, inter alia, Rafiq Schami's *Damascus Nights*. Following the tradition of the *hakawati* (storyteller), Schami spins an amusing and fanciful tale about Syrian life in the 30s — indeed, a modern Oriental fairy tale.

Hanna Mina's *Fragments of Memory* is set in roughly the same time period, but would seem to recall another country and people altogether. In this autobiographical novel, Mina tells the story of the impoverished rural population in the North of the country during the French Mandate. Far from being a fairy tale, *Fragments of Memory* employs a realistic style to describe the harsh physical, social and economic conditions under which they lived.

Yet, *Fragments of Memory* is not the typical social realistic novel with sweeping descriptions of the political and social events of the day. Rather, historical events are encountered as they filter through a set of multiple lenses. The first lens is memory which Mina describes as "the eye of the fish under water in a storm" (p. 143). The second lens is the perspective of the young son of the family — presumably Mina himself as a boy — who tells the story. The third lens is the mother of the family.

In one of the few passages where Mina writes directly as the author speaking in retrospect. He reveals something of how and why he wrote the book: "The past has always found a lively reception in me. It matures in my being, is clarified and becomes translucent as drops of clear water... I seldom draw my subject matter from any source other than these drops; from that thing that has fermented, been refined and become alcohol liable to

ignite and blaze up within me when touched off by the match stick of recall" (p. 3).

These are two of the many instances where Mina evokes the imagery of water and the sea which characterises much of his other writing. In *Fragments of Memory*, this imagery stands in sharp contrast to the barren environment in which his protagonists live. However, it highlights an important fact in the history of the family whose story is told: They, like Mina himself, are originally from the coastal city, Latakia. It is poverty that has forced them to wander inland in search of a living.

Midway into the novel, there is mention of popular revolts erupting in the areas of Damascus, Aleppo, Latakia and other places. But mainly, events are related by the young boy as he experiences them. In spatial terms, this is an extremely narrow lens for viewing the world, for he seldom leaves the immediate vicinity of the hut and fields where his sharecropper family live and work. For him, the best part of life is cuddling up to his mother and listening to the stories she tells to keep fear, hunger and misery at bay.

The boy's ideas of the outside world are gleaned from this illiterate woman who has experienced life via the seasons, migrations and twists of fate that impacted on her family. The lens provided by her understanding of reality is both extremely limited and broad. Poverty and social traditions preclude her from education or even going shopping on her own.

Overall, the family's situation seems to preclude their taking any initiative to improve their lives. Everything is determined by the power relations of the semi-feudal system where sharecroppers render three-fourths of their crop to the landowner. This makes them virtual slaves who cannot leave the estate until paying the debt will never be able to pay; who perpetually live on the brink of starvation; and who are forced to hand over their wives or daughters as domestic servants, or worse, in the homes of the landowners.

At the same time, the lens of the mother's experience is broad, for the family actually lives the sweeping historical events of the times. The parents grew up as famine struck Greater Syria during world

War I, when Britain and France blockaded the coast in line with their military strategy. The mother and father experienced this as *Safar Baar* (a journey by land), as thousands of coastal city residents migrated inland in search of food.

The children of the family grow up as the next big catastrophe hits: Syria's raw silk industry collapses when cheaper synthetic silk floods the market. The family is successful in raising silkworms, but when they go to sell the precious cocoons, the landowner refuses to buy them. In a bitter irony, the fate of this family living in a primitive, isolated, rural environment is entirely dependent on the whims of the world market.

The end of the novel bears direct witness to the

sparks of the exciting historical events of the times, as peasants first pilfer from and then burn the mukhtar's grain storage to alleviate and protest their impending starvation. *Fragments of Memory* presages the peasant revolts that formed the backbone of Syria's national independence struggle. The conclusion of the book is as much an introduction to a new story of modern Syrian history, and one wishes the author to continue. Hanna Mina has, of course, written "the rest of the story" elsewhere in Arabic. Hopefully, this is not the last of his works to be translated for the English readership.

Sally Bland

BOOK REVIEWS

Career of distinction

Iraqi Statesman: A Portrait Of
Mohammad Fadhel Jamali

By Harry J. Almond
Grosvenor Books, London 1993, £11.95

I have known Dr. Jamali for almost half a century. But until the appearance of this book I was unaware of his interest in the movement known as Moral Re-Armament and his friendship with Dr. Buchman. This is the somewhat unusual route by which Almond reached his decision to undertake a study of the former Iraqi minister whose career had been largely conducted on the international stage, beginning with the San Francisco conference in 1945 and continuing through many sessions of United Nations' organs and the Afro-Asian conference at Bandung in 1955, where he was one of the leading anti-Communists.

His career had started in the Ministry of Education, but he was transferred to foreign affairs by Nuri Al-Said in 1943. The background to this transfer seems to have involved suspicions, probably false, that he had pro-German sympathies, and pressure from the British embassy that he should consequently

be removed from a position of influence on Iraqi youth. This does not explain the choice of the Foreign Ministry, which may have had some connection with the custom of including one or two Shiite ministers in the predominantly Sunni governments of the time. The general preference given to members of the Sunni community resulted in a small number of Shiites acquiring an exceptionally privileged position. Jamali was foreign minister five times and prime minister for seven months.

After the revolution of 1958 he was sentenced to death, but he was eventually released after three years' imprisonment. The chapter describing this experience is based on his own recollections and is the most interesting in the book. His release in 1961 was shortly followed by an invitation from President Bourguiba to settle in Tunisia, a country of which he was already an honorary citizen. There he embarked on a long epilogue (he is now in his 91st year) largely occupied by teaching in the University of Tunis and by writing. His memoirs are written but not yet published — Middle East International.

Harold Beeley

Report finds vitamins, minerals can save millions of lives

By Jon Schaffer
USIA

WASHINGTON — Millions of lives around the world would be saved and the health of hundreds of millions of others improved if three vitamin and mineral deficiencies in people's diets were eradicated, according to a new World Bank report.

The report, released on Dec. 16, says that deficiencies in three so-called "micronutrients" — vitamin A, iodine and iron — are responsible for some of the most burdensome diseases in the world.

The World Bank found that more than 13 million people suffer night blind-

ness or total blindness because of lack of Vitamin A and that six of every 10 pre-school children with severe Vitamin A deficiency die. Vitamin A is found in fruits and vegetables, liver and breast milk.

About 1,000 million people worldwide suffer from anemia caused by iron deficiencies, and an equal number lack adequate iodine in their food, according to the report.

It says that about 30 per cent of the children in Africa who enter hospitals with severe anemia die unless given blood transfusion. In Bangladesh, 99.5 per cent of all pregnant women are anemic, and two thirds of these have

severe anemia, contributing to 20 per cent of all maternal deaths and to low birth weights of the children there, it says. Iron is found in red meat and breast milk. It also is found in grains, legumes and vegetables, but is less easily absorbed from these unless taken at the same time with meat or foods rich in Vitamin C.

Five to 10 children of every 1,000 births for women who do not eat seafood or otherwise get iodine, such as through iodine-fortified salt, are dead upon birth or soon thereafter, the report says. Many of those who survive are mentally retarded, spastic and have low life expectancy. It

says. The report, *Enriching Lives*, estimates that an imaginary country of 50 million with the level of micronutrient deficiencies that exists today in South Asia would likely suffer the following annual losses due entirely to inadequate Vitamin A, iron and iodine: 20,000 deaths, 11,000 children born mentally retarded or blinded as preschoolers, 1.3 million persons-years of work lost due to lethargy or more severe disability, and 360,000 student-years wasted.

Globally, it finds that more than two billion people are at risk from micronutrient deficiencies and more than one billion are

acutely ill or disabled by them.

"This report demonstrates for the first time the terrible social and economic consequences of these deficiencies to a nation," Alan Berg, senior nutrition advisor with the World Bank, said in a press release.

The report says that as much as 5 per cent of a country's gross domestic product may be wasted in lost lives, disability and productivity as a result of micronutrient malnutrition.

Addressing micronutrient deficiencies globally will require an estimated \$1 billion annually, it says. Most of these costs will ultimately be borne by consumers who purchase

food with higher nutritional quality. However, in the short run, donors and governments may have to assume a major financial burden for project preparation and start-up costs, it says.

The report argues that corrective solutions are very cheap with substantial payoffs — as high as 84 times the programme costs.

"One measure is to fortify the food and water supply," it says. "In a country of 50 million people, this would cost about \$25 million per year, or 50 cents per capita. The \$25 million investment would yield a 40-fold return on investment, even without counting the future losses due to poor school per-

formance and low work output."

The report says that salt, bread and water can be fortified with iodine; wheat flour, cornmeal, rice, salt, sugar, condiments, milk, infant cereals and processed foods can be fortified with iron; and sugar, cooking fat, margarine, vegetable oils and tea can be fortified with Vitamin A.

Other approaches include supplementing the diet with pharmaceutical nutrients and by dietary change through expanding the demand for, and supply of, nutrient-rich foods.

The report notes some success stories. India requires the iodization of salt. As a result three million tonnes of salt are fo-

dized out of total salt consumption of 4.5 million tonnes. In Guatemala, the school-feeding programme uses a biscuit fortified with a number of vitamins and minerals. In Chile and the United States infant foods are fortified with iron.

In 1995, the World Bank said, it will lend \$60 million for various micronutrient projects — the largest including iodizing salt, fortifying cooking oil with Vitamin A and introducing iron-fortified wheat flour in Pakistan and salt iodization in China. Other projects include iodizing water from pumps in Mali and making iron tablets available to pregnant women in Bangladesh.

Progress made in shrinking tumours in lab animals

By Joanne Kenen
Reuters

WASHINGTON — Scientists have reported progress in cutting off blood supply to a wide variety of tumours in laboratory animals, a finding that could lead to new ways of making human cancers shrink and disappear.

"We don't want to oversell this — we're not saying we have the magic bullet, there's a lot more research to be done. But so far, we have good results," said Dr. David Cheresh, one of the lead scientists on the project at the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California.

The research by Dr. Cheresh and colleague Peter Brooks was published in the journal *Cell*.

The Scripps team was able to block growth of new blood vessels that feed tumours without causing any damage to blood vessels in normal

healthy tissue in laboratory animals. They accomplished this with a single injection of a monoclonal antibody named LM609 or with a small synthetic peptide.

Without a blood supply, the tumour shrinks and vanishes. The team got encouraging results in an array of solid tumours — including lung, colon, breast and brain cancers.

Though Dr. Cheresh is excited about his findings and believes they hold promise, he stressed that approaches that work well in laboratories can turn out to be disappointments in human trials. Studies will have to be completed on the antibody's toxicity or possible harmful side effects in humans before clinical trials can start, probably in around 18 months.

It is customary for the first human trials to involve severely ill people, whose cancer is already advanced and who have

not responded to other treatments.

But the research with chicken embryos, described in *Cell*, as well as more recent studies on laboratory mice, has been very encouraging, Dr. Cheresh told Reuters in a telephone interview.

"It's having an exciting and powerful impact on cancer," he said.

The Scripps team used human tumour fragments placed in chicken embryos. Within a few hours, the pieces of tumour began attracting new blood vessels, just as they would in human beings. Within 24 hours, they were injected with the antibody or with a control antibody.

In those injected with LM609, the blood vessels to the tumours shrank and disappeared in the pancreas, breast, brain, lung and lymph.

Normal blood vessels were unaffected. And once the tumour vanished, the chicken embryos de-

veloped normally.

In those with the control substance, the blood vessels proliferated and the tumours could thrive.

In a related study, still in progress, the LM609 injection also shows promise in treating eye disease, including macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy, that are caused when new blood vessels form in the back of the eye. Both diseases can cause blindness.

A San Diego-based company, Ixys, Inc., has licensed the LM609 antibody and has created a humanised form of it. The goal is to begin clinical trials within the next 18 months, first for cancer and then for eye disease, Dr. Cheresh said.

Further down the road, the approach may also hold promise for treating various inflammatory diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, that also prompt the body to grow new blood vessels.

Fake medicines, poor policing sap Asia's health

By Shyam Kumar
Reuters

BOMBAY — Fake medicines from filthy, ill-equipped, fly-by-night factories are sapping the health of Asia's poor in the absence of effective policing and deterrent penalties, companies, doctors and health advocates say.

For European and U.S. multinational eyeing one of the world's largest markets for pharmaceuticals, counterfeit drugs compound the problems of a tough market bedevilled by lack of enforceable patent and trademark laws, industry analysts say.

Spurious medicines such as tablets that are often nothing but compressed chalk powder are prevalent in parts of China and the Indian subcontinent where literacy levels are low, hospitals starved for money and state health departments poorly staffed.

And, they are also a problem in parts of South East Asia. There are hundreds of ill-equipped and often unhygienic drug manufacturing units in India. And India's rag pickers who collect empty medicine

bottles are a major conduit for underground gangs counterfeiting drugs on the subcontinent.

"But the extent of counterfeits is still guesswork, as there is no central monitoring agency," said Arun Bal of the Bombay-based Association for Community Action in Safety and Health (ACASH).

Last year, the Health Department of the Western state of Maharashtra ordered Glaxo India, one of the India's leading drug companies, to close its Bombay factory for a week after finding products the factory rejected were reaching the market through the company's scrap dealers.

N.I. Gandhi, managing director of Indian drug firm Lyka Labs said better packaging would prevent adulteration, but the Indian government will not allow reimbursement of packaging costs for price-controlled medicines.

Fakes are not so much the problem in the Philippines, Thailand and other parts of South East Asia as is the copying of brand-name drugs developed by leading pharmaceutical firms.

Legitimate drug companies in the Philippines are pressing for laws to tighten the definition of counterfeiting and to impose heavier penalties on it. They say counterfeiters are hard to prosecute, as they are mostly underground operations.

Until last year, both China and Thailand did not accept product patent protection — India still does not — thereby making legal the sale of generic copies of medicines still under patent protection elsewhere.

Generic medicines, which duplicate the chemical formula of an original patented product but do not carry its brand name, allow the drug to be sold at a lower price, either because the life of the original patent has expired or by license agreement with the holder of an unexpired patent.

Aftab Malik, of the Pharmaceutical Producers Association of Thailand, says many generic medicines available in Thailand are not as effective as the brand-name originals, exposing consumers to dangers.

"The argument that generics are not effective is not true," said Amar Jassani, a Bombay doctor. "They have the same effect on the human system."

But a generic drug's effectiveness depends on the equipment and quality standards of the drug company making it.

In Indonesia, the government is seeking to ease restrictions on the sale of generic medicines, which are significantly cheaper than the brand-name leaders.

But the country faces the problem of syndicates

illegally producing sub-standard medicines or ineffective placebos — and selling the fake pills for one-fifth the price of the genuine articles.

"Counterfeits are always a problem, but the industry is not talking about it as much as it was a year or so ago," said consultant Jim Castle of Business Advisory Indonesia.

Foreign drug companies selling in China have the additional problem of not being able to register their patents and trademarks if local Chinese firms get onto the market first with a generic duplicate of their product.

"Local generics often apply before us, and when this happens we are not allowed to distribute that product for three years," said an executive. "The Chinese are savvy about doing this and getting in ahead of foreign firms," he said.

Fake- and look-alike drugs continue to be sold in parts of China thanks to local government protection, companies said.

Though recently, the Tianjin City authorities intervened to close down a plant making counterfeiters. The stock was burnt and two people were arrested.

"People could get killed because of lack of proper medicines," said an executive. "The government is not yet willing to take severe penalties."

Leading pharmaceutical firms in China are trying to protect themselves by reducing their distributors to a few recognised, authorised dealers.

"If the hospital buys elsewhere, they know there is no guarantee that the product is not counterfeit," said one legitimate manufacturer.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

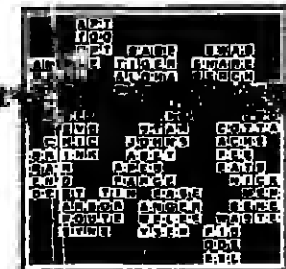
BUTTERFLIES
By Charles R. Woodard

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Diagrams 21 x 21
By Roger Coburn

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SOLUTIONS OF LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE



U.N. cites joint programmes to fight AIDS

By Wendy Lubetkin
USIA

GENEVA — The director of the United Nations' new joint programme on AIDS says he intends to take a multifaceted approach to the epidemic that would promote development and human rights, and focus on the impact of the disease on individuals, communities and health services.

"It was already clear five or 10 years ago that this disease cuts across all levels and all aspects of society and the human condition," Dr. Peter Piot told a Dec. 16 press conference. "With AIDS prevention and control there is no single remedy, no single approach."

"The challenge" of directing the new inter-agency programme will be "to find the right balance," he said.

The United Nations programme will bring together the AIDS-related activities of six different programmes: the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF); the World Bank; and the World Health Organisation (WHO). On Dec. 12 U.N.

Secretary General Boutros Ghali appointed Dr. Piot, a 45-year-old Belgian physician who has been active in the AIDS field for over a decade, to head the new programme. The aim of the joint effort, Dr. Ghali explained, will be to "unite our efforts, coordinate our actions and reduce duplication."

Dr. Piot says he is "under no illusions about the challenges ahead."

"Bringing six agencies together in this way has never been done before, but I am confident that it can be done because of the nature of the problem, which can unite agencies, as it can unite people," he said.

In many ways the joint programme will be "a kind of test case, or laboratory" for U.N. inter-agency cooperation on other global issues, he said.

Since 1987, international efforts to combat the AIDS epidemic have been coordinated by the WHO's Global Programme on AIDS (GPA). The WHO programme will continue its work under the direction of Dr. Michael Merson until the end of 1995 at which time certain of its components will be absorbed by the new inter-agency programme, according to Dr. Piot. The programme will be headquartered in Geneva.

ANSWERS

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. As long as 300 to 400 years.
2. A pen name or pseudonym.
3. From 5% to 5 1/2 ounces.
4. Congruent.
5. From the town where it is produced, Cognac, France.

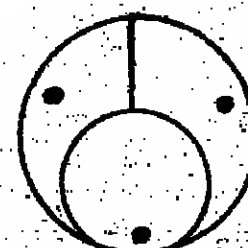
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PUZZLES

- (A) LOVEMATCH.
1. Cleopatra.
 2. Josephine.
 3. Elizabeth Taylor.
 4. Elizabeth Barrett.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

(B) CIRCLE LINE



Moi pushes for Sudan talks

NAIROBI (Agencies) — The presidents of Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea and vice-president of Uganda met on Wednesday in a new year bid to revive deadlocked talks to end a 12-year-old war in south Sudan.

Neither side in the conflict, Sudan's military government of General Omar Hassan Al-Bashir and the divided Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) rebels, were invited to the talks in Nairobi.

Officials said it was a ground-breaking meeting in the search for peace, with Kenya suggesting mediators propose resumed face-to-face talks if thorny issues were put aside at first.

Official sources said Kenya wanted the Khartoum government to ease its position at negotiations on Islamic Sharia law in exchange for the rebels doing the same on their demands for self-determination in the war-devastated south.

The SPLA says it wants a secular state and recognition that southerners, who are mainly Christian or animist, can determine the future status of their region.

Khartoum says Sudan — Africa's largest country — cannot be sub-divided and it is not willing to compromise on Sharia law.

The sources said if the mediators agreed on the proposals they would call a new round of talks with both sides within a month.

Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi, Eritrea's Isayas Afewerki and Ethiopia's Meles Zenawi and Ugandan Vice-President Specioze Wandira Kiizwe met under the auspices of the Inter-governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD).

Neither Mr. Moi nor the other regional leaders made any formal statements to journalists before their one-day summit on Sudan opened at state house, Mr. Moi's official residence in Nairobi.

The last IGADD summit on Sudan was held in Lilongwe early last month, also under Mr. Moi's chairmanship.

President Bashir said after that meeting that steps had been taken for a peace conference soon with the rebels, but gave no details.

Government and rebel negotiators have held three rounds of talks in Nairobi since 1993, but without success.

Gen. Bashir, whose military junta seized power in 1989, appealed to the rebels on Sunday — the 39th anniversary of independence

from Anglo-Egyptian rule — to lay down their arms.

He called on exiles to return to Sudan, but warned at the same time that he was training a million loyalists in the use of arms.

"We advocate peace," he said, but went on to declare that his moves were aimed at preparing a jihad to defend "the country and the faith."

The rebel movement splintered last month, with a faction led by Lam Akol splitting off last month from the Southern Sudan Independence Army (SSIA) of Riek Machar — itself a splinter group of the main SPLA headed by John Garang — to reform the Sudan People's Liberation Army—United, the former name of the SSIA.

The rebels have fared badly on the battlefield, and admit they will be facing overwhelming odds during the coming offensive, expected to start this month, with supplies of material drying up as a result of the splintering of the movement.

The government meanwhile estimates the cost of the civil war at \$1 million a day. It signed a letter of intent with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in November to reschedule its IMF debt, estimated at \$1.7 billion.

"There is a problem for us, a dilemma that gets worse the longer the fighting goes on," said one European diplomat.

"The political reality dictates that, if we're smart, we'll keep fairly quiet while making the right noises of concern. But that means we put aside the moral questions as the price."

West worried over Yeltsin's Chechnya dilemma

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuters

LONDON — Western governments, which have so far voiced only muted criticism of Moscow over the Russian blitz in Chechnya, face an increasingly unpleasant dilemma.

Diplomats say the United States and its European allies are aware that the conflict over the breakaway region could seriously damage President Boris Yeltsin's position, something the West is desperate to avoid.

Ontright condemnation of Russia, Europe's biggest power, would also make relations worse at a time when they are already strained over other questions such as the expansion of NATO to Eastern Europe and U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq.

But diplomats concede that gruesome television pictures and graphic reports of civilian casualties in Grozny show Russia has violated international principles — principles reaffirmed only last month at a European security summit in Budapest.

"There is a problem for us, a dilemma that gets worse the longer the fighting goes on," said one European diplomat.

"The political reality dictates that, if we're smart, we'll keep fairly quiet while making the right noises of concern. But that means we put aside the moral questions as the price."

That gap between reality and solemn declarations of principle is as old as diplomacy itself and has been much in evidence in the post-cold war world, from Somalia to Bosnia.

So far, "realpolitik" still has the upper hand in the West — even though governments are increasingly uneasy.

With Mr. Yeltsin's own advisers openly admitting that the crisis has weakened his position and his public ratings hitting record lows, the fear is that Russia's future could now be at stake.

Western governments have pinned their hopes on Mr. Yeltsin to guide his country through democratic and economic reforms to a new era of stability, much as they pinned their hopes on the Soviet Union's last leader, Mikhail Gorbachev.

"There are many who say we shouldn't focus so much on Yeltsin but it's hard to see who else to support. He is our best hope and we cannot afford to do anything that might undermine him, especially now over Chechnya," said another diplomat.

"It's not worth souring our relations with Moscow to a dangerous degree for Chechnya. That's the reality."

When the crisis flared in December, Western governments said it was an internal Russian affair and voiced the hope that Moscow would resolve it quickly and with minimum



BORIS YELTSIN: A president in trouble

bloodshed. Those hopes have been dashed.

The United States expressed concern that planes had bombed civilian targets in Grozny just two days before Russian tanks moved into the city on New Year's Eve.

But President Bill Clinton said the conflict was not "black and white" and that there was no comparison with China's crushing of pro-democracy protesters in 1989. Russia was trying to deal as best it could with

a "secessionist movement."

France, anxious to be seen making an active start to its presidency of the European Union (EU), said on Monday it wanted to use a pan-European security body to help resolve the crisis through dialogue and negotiation.

But Paris did not say how it would use the 53-nation Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), of which Russia is a leading member.

Any action would require the consent of Russia since the OSCE works only

through agreement among all member states. Diplomats said Moscow was unlikely to cooperate at this stage.

All member states of the OSCE subscribe on paper to principles including the rejection of the use of force, respect for minorities and protection of human rights.

These were drawn up during the 1970s at the height of the cold war. The West argued at the time that this meant no state could continue to say that how it treated its own people was purely an "internal affair."

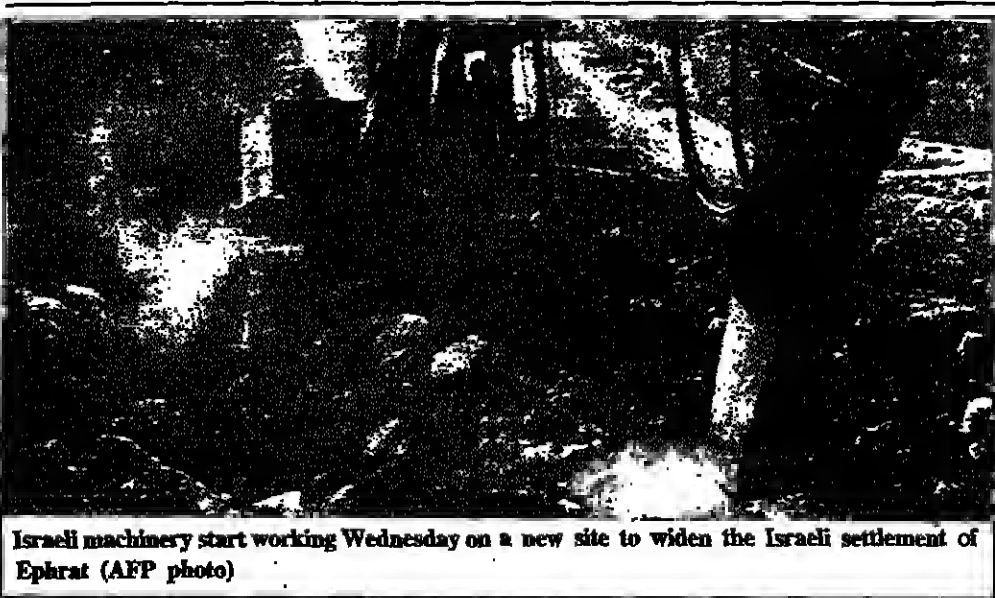
Western governments no longer appear to be taking the same line with Chechnya but some, at least, are aware that this does not do justice to often-repeated principles.

Germany issued the strongest statement yet about the crisis in Chechnya on Monday, accusing Russia of violating human rights by using an unwarranted amount of force.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman said Moscow disregarded a request by EU ambassadors last week to show restraint.

But German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said on Tuesday his country still backed Mr. Yeltsin and that the conflict remained an internal affair for Russia to settle.

"The whole episode is a tragedy and it cannot be solved from abroad," Mr. Kinkel said.



Israeli machinery start working Wednesday on a new site to widen the Israeli settlement of Ephrat (AFP photo)

Israel-PLO self-rule talks stalled

(Continued from page 1)

pull over the Israeli-PLO crisis talks which ended in disarray in Cairo on Tuesday.

"The level of trust is no longer what it was between Israel and the Palestinians," government spokesman Uri Dromi said after Tuesday's talks in Cairo.

"There is general frustration. We reproach them for not doing enough to fight terrorism and they accuse us of continuing settlements and delaying our redeployment on the West Bank," Mr. Dromi said.

"But the frequency of our meetings shows that the sides are looking for ways to prevent the peace process from collapsing."

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat are to meet next week at the Erez crossing between Israel and the self-rule Gaza Strip in a bid to break the deadlock, although no specific day has been mentioned.

One senior official said he expected progress when the two meet.

Chief PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath said in Cairo late Tuesday that there was real concern about the future of autonomy which was launched in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho last May.

"What we have is a real fear that the peace process will be stalled, interrupted, which will then end all our achievements," he said.

Dr. Shaath said he had received some assurances from Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on the question of settlements but they were inadequate.

The Palestinians wanted to see a total halt to settlement building, especially around Jerusalem, and not just the transfer of construction from one hill to another.

The Israeli government decided this week to stop the extension of a settlement at

Ephrat, near Bethlehem, following Palestinian protests, but then authorised the building of 260 new homes nearby.

Bulldozers on Wednesday began clearing land for building at the new site.

But the compromise has done little to defuse the crisis over Jewish settlements, one of the thorniest points to be negotiated in the 1993 Israeli-PLO peace deal.

Witnesses said workers broke ground for housing units on a hillside tract next to another hill where Israeli troops and protesters clashed last week over plans to build on what Arab villagers said was their land.

On Monday Israel's government, under pressure from its Palestinian peace partners, had halted work at the scene of the clashes, near the village of Al Khader, but authorised work on another location, closer to the existing Jewish settlement of Ephrat.

The PLO maintains continued settlement will wreck the talks.

"As one who has taken part in very many meetings like this, I can say that this was a perhaps especially difficult meeting," Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, a senior negotiator and an architect of self-rule in Gaza and Jericho, told Israel Radio.

Mr. Sarid expressed hope the talks would get back on track when Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat meet in Gaza next week.

Mr. Peres said in Cairo that his government had decided not to build any new settlements, nor to confiscate land to enlarge existing settlements or invest public money in other extensions.

"The Palestinians made an extraordinary, nit-picking presentation against Israeli policy in the territories," a senior Israeli foreign ministry official said.

"The tone has rarely been so harsh since the start of the process. It is clear the Palesti-

nians no longer trust the Israelis," he said.

Spokesman Dromi said: "This process has experienced ups and downs. But we have known worse, for example, after Hebron," where a settler shot dead at least 30 Palestinians at prayer last February.

"We know where we are going. In May 1996 at the latest we will negotiate the final status. The only problem is the rate at which we are advancing," he said.

No progress has been reported in the last several weeks on overcoming differences over extending autonomy on the West Bank.

Dr. Shaath said the Cairo meeting was tense also because of demands for the release of Palestinian prisoners.

He denied Israel's claim that prisoners had not been released because they had not signed a pledge to renounce terror. "Among the prisoners are 700 who have signed the pledges demanded by Israel but they have not been released," he said.

He said that 60 per cent of the prisoners were from moderate Palestinian factions which support the peace process.

"Holding thousands of Palestinian prisoners is an unforgivable crime. I told them we refuse any racist talk which says they (the prisoners) have blood on their hands, because I say every Israeli pilot who has fired bombs on Palestinian camps and killed children has blood on his hands," he added.

Dr. Shaath said all sides should forget past grievances in a time of peace.

"When we reach peace, we reach peace to end all these acts, so all these people who have participated as occupiers or resistance fighters did so in the past, and everything should finish now, these prisoners should no longer be in detention," he said.

He said he made the decision to stop bombings after meeting top officials in Moscow and said he had taken into account appeals from ordinary people and members of parliament who have protested against the bombing raids.

"The decision was taken on the basis of the materials the president has received ... and guided by the desire to prevent an increase in the number of victims among the civilian population," the press service said in a statement.

Mr. Yeltsin's press service

Philippe Starck, design with a human face

By Pierre Michel

WHAT DISTINGUISHES Philippe Starck from any other designer is the way that the objects that he creates fit into their period, the ability they have to escape their creator and to blend into the use for which they are intended. Therein lies the whole of Mr. Starck's ambiguity and genius. Each of the creations of this myth-making media star is independent and has the ability to make its own success and its own myth. But, at the same time, it fits into another perspective, one that, through all his other achievements, contributes to constructing a story or a work.

Philippe Starck set up his own agency at the beginning of the 1980s. He wanted to have a small staff and a flexible structure in order to maintain a haute-couture spirit. He made his first, and maybe most prestigious, creations in the area of interior design, first of all in Paris with the "Bains-Douches" nightclubs, the president's apartments in the Elysée Palace and the "Costes" café near the "Halles" district, and then in Tokyo with the "Mannin" restaurant, and in New York with the "Royalton" Hotel.

His second area of activity is, in chronological order, that of furniture design. He is very prolific in this sector. His best-known pieces of furniture include the Dole Melipone folding table, the Ray Menta lamp, the Jack Lang collection or his collection for the Habitat store and for the 3 Suisses catalogue. The agency's two departments are industrial design and architecture.

The former includes a new line of Laguiole knives, a revolutionary lemon-squeezer, a toothbrush which has now become a classic, and very recently, the latest range of Thomson television sets. Philippe Starck's architectural activities have, above all, developed in Japan (the Nani Nani building in Tokyo). In France, people are waiting for the imminent appearance of the individual house, sold by correspondence, that he designed for the 3 Suisses.

In such diversified and considerable work, one may wonder what coherence and what constants can be found, all the more so, when he is questioned. Philippe Starck always strongly asserts his mistrust of globalising theories, of the usual splitting-up into concepts (for instance: modernism/post-modernism) and of what is

written in general. In fact, he prefers the spoken word. He has an art for finding the right expressions. He strings them along during the countless interviews that he gives, in the specialised or general press, giving us the sparse keys to decipher his work. Out of all his key words, there are six major ones:

— The word "Service+" takes up and extends the concept of functionalism. Philippe Starck explains, "pleasure, semantics, poetry, humour and magic music be considered as functions in the same way as other more utilitarian ones."

— The term "minimum object" explains Mr. Starck's taste for simplicity and economy which he opposes to the minimalism of the modern movement of the 20s. He replaces the famous expression by the German architect Mies Van Der Rohe "Less is more" by "doing more with less."

— Another key-concept, that of "anonymity+" reminds the designer of the necessity to disappear, to efface himself behind his objects and to let them find their autonomy on their own.

— "Symbolism and scenarios" is perhaps the most

important category to understand Philippe Starck's work. He usually opposes it to the notion of style. For him, the aesthetic work on an object should no longer be stylistic but semantic. He frequently repeats, "I do not make shapes, I make meaning."

— Another essential expression, that of "magic design," imparts Mr. Starck's dream of having the object disappear in favour of its use and of having a new relationship defined between man and object, which is no longer technological in nature, "but poetry, magic and sensuality."

"Magic, means Kubrick," says Mr. Starck. "It is the monolith of '2001, Space Odyssey.' It is that object which has descended from the sky, which is neither a piece of furniture nor a machine, all of whose functions are concealed behind the circumspect shape of a parallelepiped."

— The ulterior stage of evolution, according to Mr. Starck, should be "biomechanical design," that is to say a synthesis of the mechanical and the organic, in which the object becomes an extension of the body, a prosthesis.

Concerning these few precepts, Philippe Starck prefers to speak of method

rather than theory, a pragmatic method to "do" for Mr. Starck is a man of action, an unsafable worker, driven by pure energy. He often uses the image of a whale which swallows up everything that crosses its path, in its enormous mouth, to express his curiosity and his gluttonous interest in everything around him, indefinitely, images, objects and people, without any censorship. He is in on all journeys and all experiences, daytime ones just as much as night-time ones. He no doubt draws this taste for adventure from his original childhood, which was complex although wealthy, during which he was unable to fit into any standard mould or any classical framework. Since then, he has enjoyed being in that avant-garde fringe of the world and in that out-of-synch position from which he is able to perceive his period and be in tune with it so as to better invent it and anticipate it in its modernity.

Perhaps Philippe Starck's greatest quality, in this arid world of specialists, is to be all-embracing, in the humanistic acceptance of the term, that is to say a free spirit.

L'Actualité en France

of him surrounded by the national flag and missiles. Some analysts in Seoul and elsewhere have speculated that North Korea wants to continue to make use of Kim Il-Sung's legacy as undisputed leader of the Stalinist state for 50 years to ensure national unity and compensate for Kim Jong-Il's comparative lack of leadership charisma.

They believe the younger Kim, who is short, pudgy, bespectacled, and according to past South Korean intelligence reports a hard-drinking womaniser, does not command the same unquestioning respect and loyalty his father enjoyed.

U.S. officials commenting on efforts last month to obtain the release of a captured American helicopter pilot said they had detected policy frictions between the military and government officials.

They said it appeared conservative elements in the military were unhappy with the breakthrough nuclear accord reached between the United States and North Korea in October and may have been out to torpedo it.

U.S. backs Afghan bid

KABUL (Agencies) — United States Ambassador to Pakistan John Monjo flew into Afghanistan Wednesday and met with senior factional leaders to express U.S. support for the United Nations peace initiative, Afghan sources said.

After flying to Bagram airbase 50 kilometres north of Kabul, Mr. Monjo met with President Burhanuddin Rabbani and ex-Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Masoud.

"The meeting between Monjo, Rabbani and Masoud was very constructive," an Afghan source told AFP.

Afghan analysts observed that Mr. Monjo's flying visit was an example of what U.N. special envoy Mahmoud Mesrui had earlier termed a more hands-on approach by the foreign community in seeking ways to try and solve the Afghan crisis.

In the late afternoon, Mr. Monjo flew to the eastern provincial capital Jalalabad where he was expected to meet with Mr. Rabbani's main rival, Hezb-e-Islami faction leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

It was understood that Mr. Hekmatyar arrived in Jalalabad early Wednesday to prepare for talks with Mr. Mesrui.

By David Brunstrom
Reuters

SEOUL — By releasing new year pictures of unannounced leader Kim Jong-Il, North Korea is trying to show the world his political base is secure, especially among the powerful military, analysts say.

Speculation as to Mr. Kim's health and hold on power has grown since the death of his father Kim Il-Sung on July 8. Despite being his long-designated successor, he has yet to formally take up the elder Kim's supreme leadership positions.

This week, North Korea released television footage of Kim Jong-Il visiting a unit of the Korean People's Army on new year's day.

His chubby face was pale under a fur hat, but he looked lively and in better health than he appeared at his father's funeral in July.

He gesticulated enthusiastically as he apparently discussed operations with senior officers and was applauded wildly by troops, with whom he posed for a formal photograph.

On Monday, North Korea's official news agen-

cy issued a photograph showing Mr. Kim at the event receiving flowers from a soldier it said belonged to military Unit 214.

"The servicemen enthusiastically welcomed him, shouting the slogan, 'Let us devotedly fight for the respected Supreme Commander General Kim Jong-Il,'" the agency said in a report on the event on Sunday.

The last time North Korea reported a public appearance by Kim Jong-Il was more than two months ago.

Analysts in Seoul said the pictures appeared aimed at quashing speculation abroad that he was in poor health and losing his influence over the powerful military.

"They are trying to show the outside world that the military is supporting him, to show that his power base is secure," said Ok Tae-Hwan, a researcher at Seoul's Research Institute for National Unification.

"We have had a lot of speculation that he is facing problems, that he is sick, but there has been no clear evidence to support that," he said.

"Rumour is rumour — I

still doubt he is really sick," Mr. Ok said. "I think Kim Jong-Il is still in control."

On Sunday, North Korea's state-run media said the most important task for the new year was to unite under 52-year-old Kim, but he did not make the new year's address his father had given in past years.

Radio Pyongyang instead reran Kim Il-Sung's message from the previous new year, after reading a lengthy joint editorial by all of North Korea's major newspapers.

Mr. Ok and other analysts said they did not consider it unusual that Kim Jong-Il had not given the address, as this had been given in the past by his father as national president.

Although Kim Jong-Il is supreme commander of the North Korean army, he still has not been named national president, general secretary of the ruling communist party, or to his father's post as head of the party's military commission.

State television did air a mass stage show in Kim Jong-Il's honour on Sunday, with young girls dancing against a huge portrait

of him surrounded by the national flag and missiles. Some analysts in Seoul and elsewhere have speculated that North Korea wants to continue to make use of Kim Il-Sung's legacy as undisputed leader of the Stalinist state for 50 years to ensure national unity and compensate for Kim Jong-Il's comparative lack of leadership charisma.

They believe the younger Kim, who is short, pudgy, bespectacled, and according to past South Korean intelligence reports a hard-drinking womaniser, does not command the same unquestioning respect and loyalty his father enjoyed.

U.S. officials commenting on efforts last month to obtain the release of a captured American helicopter pilot said they had detected policy frictions between the military and government officials.

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business daily beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

More free phone calls allowed

★ The Council of Ministers decided to increase the number of free local phone calls from 1,000 to 1,600 a year. The free phone calls will be stretched over four periods at a rate of 400 each year, starting from January 1995. Phone charges for calls to Kuwait, Lebanon and Yemen were also reduced to JD 1.100 per minute to Kuwait and JD 0.750 per minute to both Lebanon and Yemen. Also under consideration is making Zarqa, Russeifa and Al Hashimiya one unit, and consider phone calls between these areas local. This would entail charging 20 fils for every four minutes. Also to be considered as one unit were Irbid, Al Husn and Beit Ras (Al Ra'i).

★ Israeli media have reported that the Israeli company AMCOR is negotiating with a Jordanian company to set up a joint solar heaters factory at a cost between \$5 to \$10 million (Al Aswaq).

★ Telcommunications Corporation Director-General Walid Dweik said that the call back telephone arrangement being promoted by companies and individuals on behalf of foreign communication firms was illegal and forbidden. Anyone involved in these banned activities will have his/her telephone disconnected (Al Dustour).

★ Jamal Bdour, director-general of the Cooperative Organisation, has presented his resignation to the Council of Ministers. The resignation is reportedly attributed to financial strains, so big that the organisation is unable to pay salaries to employees (Al Dustour).

★ The Arab Bank Ltd. attracted JD 100 million in deposits in the occupied territories since it resumed operations there about 40 days ago. According to Arab Bank Chairman Abdul Majed Shomra, the Jordanian dinar is widely used in the West Bank while the dollar is more dominant in Gaza (Al Ra'i).

★ Jordan Paper and Card-board Factories Company started construction on a JD 7 million project to manufacture coated and non-coated duplex paper boards. Trial production of this type of carton is expected to begin in June 1995. The capacity of this project will be about 30,000 tonnes, to cover local market needs as well as a large portion of the needs of neighbouring markets (Al Ra'i).

★ Jordan Bar Association President Kamal Naser reminds all businesses of the law that requires local and foreign establishments to appoint a lawyer or legal advisor from among lawyers registered at the association. Failing to adhere to this requirement would result in JD 2 fine per day after a period of 3-month since starting operations. The association is providing a discount until Jan. 31, 1995, for early settlement dues (Al Dustour).

★ The Income Tax Department is distributing 1994 self-assessment tax forms. Tax-payers who submit their forms during January 1995 will be entitled to a six per cent discount of the tax amount (Al Aswaq).

★ According to Tayseer Abdul Jabbar, a former minister and ex-director of ESCWA (Economic and Social Commission for West Asia), Jordan's unemployment stands at 18 per cent, inflation of foodstuff prices at 10 per cent and poverty stands at 30 per cent. He said in a lecture at the Amman Rotary Club that the United Nations report estimated the per capita income in Jordan at \$4,000 a year and not at \$1,200 as it is commonly known because the size of the Kingdom's economy is much bigger than the \$5 billion declared figure (Al Ra'i).

Israel to spend \$2.5b on defence industry

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israel's ailing defence industry will cost the government \$2.5 billion over a four-year period, the director general of the finance ministry, David Brodett, said Wednesday. Mr. Brodett also said that within the next 18 months the industry will have to slash a further 5,000 to 6,000 jobs. Four years ago the industry employed 40,000 workers. The figure now stands at 24,000 and the government has set a target of 18,000-19,000. The government's rescue plan for the three defence companies will cost \$2.5 billion from 1993-96 including some funds that have already been disbursed. The government has committed \$525 million to Israel Aircraft Industries' recovery programme as well as \$400 million to Israel Military Industries, which has submitted a request for an additional \$400 million. Mr. Rafael, Israel's third military contractor, will receive \$650 million in aid. Israel's military industry has been hit by a decline in defence spending worldwide as well as by a cancellation of orders by the Israeli army. Israel Military Industries' situation is particularly troublesome. "Earlier this week we presented to the prime minister a very gloomy picture about the functioning of this company," Mr. Brodett said. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has given management and workers at Israel Military Industries an ultimatum. Either they agree by next week on severance payments and the number of workers to be sacked or the government will appoint a receiver, Mr. Brodett said.

Dubai free zone to target high-tech industry

DUBAI (R) — Jebel Ali free zone hopes to attract more manufacturing and high-technology industries in 1995, zone chief Sultan Bin Sulayem said Wednesday. The free zone in Dubai, the second largest emirate and commercial hub of seven in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has already attracted giants like Japan's Sony and Awa electronics corporations, Nissan cars, Acer computers and Shell chemicals. "We are targeting high-tech companies like electronics and computers," Mr. Sulayem, the zone chairman and managing director, told Reuters in an interview. He said he expected the number of firms operating in the zone to rise by almost 40 per cent this year thanks to growing interest from abroad. "We feel we could reach 1,000 by the end of the year," he said. There are now 725 companies representing billions of dirhams worth of capital investment in the free zone, set up in 1985 as part of the Dubai government's efforts to diversify the economy and lessen dependence on oil. If offered special incentives to investors, including freedom from import duties and corporate and personal income taxes, 100 per cent foreign ownership and full repatriation of profits. Mr. Sulayem said Jebel Ali's main competition was from the Far East but the zone had managed to entice both Sony and Awa to move their Middle East distribution hubs Singapore to Dubai. Although manufacturers who used advanced technology were top of the list of companies targeted by the free zone, Mr. Sulayem said distributors still had a very important role to play. "Distribution is still a major thing. About 65 per cent of the registered companies are involved in distribution," he pointed out. The Middle East, Indian Subcontinent and North and East Africa were the most important markets for zone-based companies, he said, but the former Soviet Union and South Africa were fast becoming strong buyers. "Last year about \$1.4 billion (worth of goods) were exported to the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) from the UAE. Its importance here is growing rapidly," he said. To attract more investors, Mr. Sulayem said improvements were planned. "We are updating our facilities and constantly comparing ourselves with other free zones. We are investing in high-tech ourselves, building new warehouses and factory units, labour accommodation and roads," he explained. He declined to say how much would be spent on these developments in 1995, but said around 300 million dirhams (\$82 million) went towards upgrading the free zone and facilities at Dubai Ports Authority (DPA), of which he is also chairman, in 1994. The two major ports managed by the DPA are Jebel Ali and Port Rashid. Mr. Sulayem said in the first 11 of the last year the DPA handled over 25 million tonnes of cargo — up six per cent on the same period in 1993. He forecast a further increase to 27 million tonnes for 1995 as a whole. Between January and November 1994 the DPA handled 1.7 million standard container units. This figure was expected to top two million in 1995, he said.

Saatchi founder makes embittered final exit

LONDON (R) — Maurice Saatchi, cofounder and deposed chairman of British advertising giant Saatchi & Saatchi Co. PLC, finally served all links with it Tuesday, saying in his view the company had been taken over. Mr. Saatchi had been offered a new, lesser, role after being ousted as chairman in a shareholder revolt led by David Herro of Chicago-based fund manager Harris Associates late last year. But in a terse, bitterly ironic memo to Saatchi Company Secretary Graham Howell, Mr. Saatchi, who had until Tuesday to make up his mind, said: "Please inform Mr. Herro that I do not accept his offer. It was kind of him to consider me for the position." Asked if the agency was taking that as an outright rejection by Mr. Saatchi, Mr. Howell said: "Yes." Mr. Saatchi expanded on the memo in a letter to staff addressed "to everyone at Saatchi" in which he said he had rejected the offer because in his view the company had been taken over. "No bid for the company has been announced. No offer has been made. No premium has been paid. No shareholder vote has been taken. But make no mistake, Saatchi & Saatchi is under new control," he wrote in the letter. He said the campaign led by Mr. Herro and other shareholders with stakes totalling some 32 per cent of the agency had been "a simple, if crude, method of controlling the company." "By threatening the directors with an extraordinary general meeting... they have given the directors their orders: 'Take your chairman to a corner and shoot him — we don't want the fuss of a public trial'." The shareholder revolt gained force last autumn on anger over a share option scheme for Mr. Saatchi that could have netted him up to £5 million (\$7.8 million) over three years. After his resignation, the agency offered him the largely honorary role of joint president along with his brother and cofounder Charles, and the chairmanship of the Saatchi & Saatchi advertising worldwide operating subsidiary. His rejection of the new role throws up the spectre of some Saatchi clients taking their business elsewhere. One of them, U.S. confectionery giant Mars, confirmed in December it was reviewing its huge worldwide advertising account with Saatchi, while another, British Airways PLC, is also reported to have lobbied in favour of Maurice Saatchi. Speculation that Mr. Saatchi will set up his own rival agency will now inevitably increase. Media analysts say, however, that financing any such venture might prove difficult, while contractual restrictions might prevent him from doing so at all. So far Saatchi & Saatchi, formed by the brothers in 1970 and the leaders of the British advertising world in the 1980s, it will now seek to change the name of its parent company — one of the other demands of the Harris-led rebels.

Financial Markets

U.S. Dollar to International Parity

Currency	New York Close Jan 3/1995	Hong Kong Close Jan 3/1995
Sterling Pound	1.5465	1.5612**
Deutsche Mark	1.5495	1.5558
Swiss Franc	1.2090	1.3138**
French Franc	5.3370	5.3685**
Japanese Yen	99.75	100.11
European Currency Unit	1.8273	1.2208**

Interbank Foreign Exchange Rates Date: 3/1/1995

Currency	1 MYL	3 MYL	6 MYL	12 MYL
U.S. Dollar	5.75	6.18	6.75	7.50
Sterling Pound	5.87	6.37	6.93	7.75
Deutsche Mark	4.87	4.93	5.18	5.42
Swiss Franc	3.75	4.06	4.25	4.56
French Franc	5.48	6.04	6.50	6.93
Japanese Yen	2.12	3.18	2.25	2.43
European Currency Unit	6.89	6.57	6.75	7.18

Forward Rates Date: 3/1/1995

Period	USD/Gr	JD/Gr	USD/Gr	JD/Gr
1 Month	582.10	7.60	582.10	7.60

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 3/1/1995

Currency	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	0.7010	0.7030
Sterling Pound	1.0214	1.0279
Deutsche Mark	0.4440	0.4522
Swiss Franc	0.5321	0.5355
French Franc	0.1304	0.1311
Japanese Yen	0.0096	0.1031
Dutch Guilder	0.0016	0.0034
Swedish Krona	0.0000	0.0000
Italian Lira	0.0000	0.0000
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000

Other Currencies Date: 3/1/1995

Currency	Buy	Sell
Rubaihi Dinar	1.8410	1.8610
Lebanese Lira	0.041600	0.042965
Saudi Riyal	0.1462	0.1485
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3050	2.3650
Qatari Riyal	0.1912	0.1942
Egyptian Pound	0.2200	0.2160
Omani Riyal	1.8040	1.8610
UAE Dirham	0.1899	0.1921
Croatian Dinar	0.2665	0.5145
Cypriot Pound	1.4050	1.5215

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Wednesday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	Canadian dollar
1.4046/56	0.7010/10
1.5392/02	0.6416/00
1.7472/82	0.1462
1.3156/66	0.1485
32.04/08	2.3050
5.3735/85	0.1912
1626.67/6	0.2200
101.17/27	1.8040
7.4475/75	0.1899
6.8240/50	0.2665
6.1200/50	1.4050
\$1.5592/02	1.5215
One sterling	
One ounce of gold	\$378.05/378.35

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN, JORDAN
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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 04/01/1995

COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CHANGING PRICE
BANKS SECTOR	87573	317577	INDEX NUMBER: 158.70	CHANGE: +0.71%
ARAB BANK	440	80600	182.250	183.500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	6484	26945	4.150	4.240
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / KRM	17309	69146	3.930	4.040
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	1500	2465	1.660	1.650
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	200	584	2.900	2.920
THE HOUSING BANK	2700	15363	5.690	5.690
JORDAN KOWAT BANK	630	1883	2.990	2.990
JORDAN GULF BANK	12400	19881	1.600	1.620
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	11450	42841	3.730	3.750
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	150	728	4.850	4.850
REIT KHALA SAVINGS INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	2050	6500	3.180	3.210
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	29660	42016	1.510	1.530
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	550	2090	3.850	3.800
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	2050	3489	1.690	1.720
INSURANCE SECTOR	1500	3943	INDEX NUMBER: 138.21	CHANGE: +0.04%
ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	1250	3188	2.540	2.550
ARAB UNION INTERNATIONAL INSURANCE	250	755	3.180	3.020
SERVICES SECTOR	150147	393792	INDEX NUMBER: 134.67	CHANGE: +1.88%
ATTANORP CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	2200	3019	1.370	1.370
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	27038	78673	2.910	2.910
THE ARAB POTASH/NEW	300	1635	5.450	5.450
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	6820	67015	9.600	9.840
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	865	3725	4.350	4.300
THE JORDAN WOODSTOCK MILLS	1200	9362	7.700	7.800
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	23061	126916	5.500	5.500
JORDAN CEMENT INDUSTRIES	2875	17969	6.300	6.250
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	350	951	2.700	2.740
SPINNING & WEAVING	350	938	2.650	2.680
RAFIA INDUSTRIES	11350	32473	2.830	2.840
DAN AL DAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	8072	8072	16.450	16.450
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	47139	48953	1.030	1.050
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	1250	8830	7.050	7.150
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	80000	77520	0.950	0.970
ARAB BANK CONVEYANCE & TRADING	46100	68189	1.450	1.450
INTERMEDIATE PYRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	500	778	1.550	1.550
JORDAN ROCCOOL INDUSTRIES	200	868	4.130	4.340
ALADDIN INDUSTRIES	42400	36890	0.860	0.870
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MACH/JINCO	1700	9010	5.330	5.300
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	1050	2113	2.020	2.000
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	2281	6363	2.780	2.770
KANTHER INVESTMENT	9350	16877	1.800	1.800
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	5550	23584	4.210	4.250
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	319324	725125	INDEX NUMBER: 129.82	CHANGE: +0.53%
GRAND TOTAL	558544	1440437	INDEX NUMBER: 144.99	CHANGE: +0.72%

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UNRWA UHB(A) VACANCIES

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East requires at its Headquarters Branch (offices located in Bayan/Wadi Seer).

1. PURCHASING OFFICERS (6 posts: Grades 11-13)
(a) Monthly take-home pay ranging from about JD340 up plus Dependency allowance, plus Provident Fund from about JD80 per month payable at end of service; as well as compulsory medical insurance.
(b) Incumbents will be responsible for the international procurement of supplies and equipment, coordinating with various UNRWA offices in English (main working language).
(c) Essential & highly desirable qualifications: University degree in Public or Business Administration; knowledge of international shipping regulations; packing systems and procurement technology; five years experience in a large purchasing activity; and working knowledge of computerised purchasing and material management systems. Fluency in English and Arabic is essential.

2. SENIOR SUPPLY OFFICER (BASIC COMMODITIES & INSURANCE)
(a) Grade 18: Monthly take-home pay starting about JD680 plus Dependency allowance, plus Provident Fund of about JD165 per month payable at end of service; as well as compulsory medical insurance.
(b) It is responsible for the procurement of all basic commodities required for UNRWA programmes; also is responsible for all insurance coverage and claims processing; controls stocks and logistics of basic commodities to meet Agency programme needs.
(c) Essential & highly desirable qualifications: University degree in Business Administration or related subject; training in supply management, international shipping marine, vehicle and property insurance, accounting and related EDP applications; 8 years' experience in the application of the academic knowledge acquired; demonstrated ability to operate PCs and standard Agency software in the context of supply operations. Very good knowledge of English & Arabic is essential.

3. SUPPLY OFFICERS (3 posts: Grades 13 & 15 in Basic Commodities & Insurance, and another in General Stores)
(a) Monthly take-home pay ranging from about JD420 up, plus Dependency allowance, plus Provident Fund of about JD100 per month payable at end of service; as well as compulsory medical insurance.
(b) Assisting the respective Senior Supply Officers with the procurement, shipping, storing and insuring of supplies and commodities required in Agency programmes; co-ordinations, exercising procurement progress control and monitoring cyclic purchasing activities.
(c) Essential & highly desirable qualifications: University degree in commerce, business administration or related discipline; six years' experience in application of this academic knowledge; demonstrated ability to operate PC and standard software for supply operations; good knowledge of shipping and commercial law and practice, including documentation, and port operations. Fluency in English and Arabic is essential.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (Supply Division)
(a) Grade 14: Monthly take-home pay starting about JD470 plus Dependency allowance, plus Provident Fund of about JD110 per month payable at end of service; as well as compulsory medical insurance.
(b) Responsible for the administrative functions of the Supply Division such as budgeting, expenditure monitoring including the efficient use of communication services, assists with Supply personnel matters, maintains the register & locator cards of equipment at UHB (Amman), arranges for testing of commodities (quality control).
(c) Essential & highly desirable qualifications: University degree in Business Administration or related discipline; five years' experience in administrative post, of which at least two in supply-related work. Demonstrated ability to operate PC and standard supply software. Very good knowledge of English and Arabic is essential.

5. REALITY DATA BASE ADMINISTRATOR:
(a) Grade 14: Monthly take-home pay starting about JD470 plus Dependency allowance, plus Provident Fund of about JD110 per month payable at end of service; as well as compulsory medical insurance.
(b) Responsible for the maintenance of all support files in the data base (including e.g. catalogues, lists of suppliers) and technical information (such as global & security settings, user authorization tables); provides on-the-job PC training of supply staff and supports the users.
(c) Essential & highly desirable qualifications: University degree in computer science or a related subject; five years' experience in applying this academic knowledge; three years' experience on PC and Novell LAN at user level, including basic hardware operation; knowledge of data base management concepts; demonstrated ability to operate PCs and knowledge of standard supply software. Very good knowledge of English and Arabic is essential.

6. INSURANCE ASSISTANT (Basic Commodities)
(a) Grade 11: Monthly take-home pay starting about JD340 plus Dependency allowance, plus Provident Fund of about JD80 per month payable at end of service; as well as compulsory medical insurance.
(b) Assists with marine, vehicle, fire and other insurance required by the Agency; processes and follows up on claims from insurers; collects, verifies, processes data related to insurance matters including entry into and verification of PC records; monitors related shipping documentation; generally, performs all assisting functions for effective insurance coverage of Agency property of all kinds.
(c) Essential & highly desirable qualifications: University degree in Business Administration or related discipline; course work in insurance. At least five years experience in supply operations of which at least three years must have been insurance claims processing at responsible level; demonstrated ability to operate PCs and standard software and applications as used in the Agency. Very good knowledge of English and Arabic is essential.

Applications must be in English and accompanied by a duly completed United Nations Personal History Form (available from UNRWA or U.N. offices), must mention the post for which the application is made, and should be submitted by close of business (15:00 hrs) on Thursday, 26 January 1995 to:

The Coordinator
UNRWA Headquarters
P.O. Box 140157 (Wadi Seer)
Amman 11614 Jordan

UNRWA welcomes applications equally from men and women. Full consideration will be given to disabled candidates whose disability does not mitigate the effective performance of the duties of the job. Priority will be given to fully qualified Palestinians.



File photo dated May 5, 1992 shows people evacuating the Furiani Stadium in Bastia a few minutes after the stands collapsed prior to the soccer match between Bastia and Olympique Marseille (AFP photo)

Football tragedy trial opens

BASTIA, France (AFP) — Security was tight Wednesday as the trial of 12 businessmen and officials charged over a football stadium disaster which killed 17 people and left up to 2,000 injured came to court on the French island of Corsica.

One of the key defendants, club president and mayor Jean-François Filippi, was murdered last week. Directors of the firm which put up the temporary stand which collapsed, local officials who issued a safety cer-

tificate and French football federation officials face charges of manslaughter and wounding.

The stand was subsequently found to have been erected hastily to boost capacity at the Furiani stadium from 8,000 to 18,000 for a Cup tie between Bastia and France's most famous club, Olympique Marseille, on May 5, 1992.

When it collapsed just before the kick-off 3,500 people were sent crashing to the ground amid a tangle of scaffolding. Fifteen people died that afternoon and another two died later of their injuries.

The three week trial was due to begin amid high security. The court house will undergo searches for bombs while the defendants will appear behind bullet-proof screens.

The prosecution has alleged a web of negligence, falsification and ineptitude while football officials are said to have turned a blind eye to the whole thing.

Modahl appeals against ban

LONDON (R) — British runner Diane Modahl, banned from athletics for four years following a positive drugs test, has formally appealed against the decision.

Modahl, the 1990 Commonwealth 800 metres champion, tested positive for excessive levels of testosterone at a meeting in Lisbon on June 18. She is the first British woman to fail a drugs test.

On Wednesday, Modahl's solicitor Tony Morton-Hooper said a letter was sent to the British Athletic Federation (BAF) late last month appealing the ban.

He said the BAF had confirmed receipt of the letter but had not yet set a date for a hearing by its independent appeal panel.

Vatanen drums up a desert storm

QUARZAZATE, Morocco (R) — Finnish veteran Ari Vatanen drummed up a desert storm Tuesday as he took over the lead in the Paris-Dakar Rally with a perfect exhibition of speed and skill on the third leg.

The Citroen driver showed no signs that two years of absence from the event had harmed the finely-honed aristry on hughed-dunes terrain which have already earned him four previous Paris-Dakar titles.

Starting the day in fifth place overall, Vatanen put his car through its paces over 405 kms of timed stages on the stony route from El Rachidia which also included the first sand dunes of the rally.

Outsitting France's Bruno Saby from first place, the Finn took a lead of more than seven minutes over his Citroen teammate Pierre Lartigue, another Frenchman.

"I'm very glad because this was the old Vatanen of the old Paris-Dakars who was driving today," the new rally leader, said.

It was a good day for Citroen with Vatanen's fellow-Finn Timo Salonen taking over third place as well as pushing Saby's Mitsubishi down to fourth.

Saby lost valuable time when he got lost for a while among the dunes.

In the motorcycles section, Heinz Kingader of Austria, riding a KTM, extended his lead and now enjoys a 10-minute cushion over Spanish Cagiva rider Jordi Arcarons.

Elite Chinese swimmers walk out on Ma Junren

BEIJING (R) — Double world record holder Wang Junxia has walked out of Ma Junren's training camp along with 15 other elite Chinese women athletes because the coach has pocketed most of their prize money, the Beijing Youth Daily said Wednesday.

The Youth Daily said the athletes had left Ma's training centre in the northeastern port city of Dalian last month after talks broke down over how to divide their winnings.

According to the Youth Daily, world 1,500 metres record holder and world 3,000 metres champion Qu Yunxia has not left the camp. But Zhang Linli, who finished second to Qu at the 1993 Stuttgart world championships, was named as one of the 16 deserters.

The report appears to signal the end of the controversial Ma's career as the newspaper added that Chinese sports officials said the team would not be disbanded but would continue to train under a new coach, who had yet to be chosen.

"The Ma family army is not a single person's wealth. It belongs to the party, the province and the country. We should all care and love it," the newspaper quoted Gao Jinchai, party secretary of northeastern Liaoning Province, as saying.

It added that the officials had decided to rename the team "Liaoning women middle and long-distance running team."

The newspaper said the runners' parents had

threatened to pull their children out of the sport altogether if they were returned to Ma's jurisdiction. "Because Ma Junren is sick and needs to be in hospital so the Ma family army has been brought to Shenyang," team manager Sun Yuesen told the newspaper.

When confronted by a reporter from the newspaper, Ma avoided the issue and said he had orders from his superiors to recuperate in hospital.

Ma was taken to hospital after he was hurt in a car crash in Liaoning late last month when his car struck a highway barrier while he was returning from his father's funeral in Anshan to the training centre.

The Youth daily said another reason for the desertion of Ma's runners was his "unreasonable" way of managing his team.

"(Ma) made excessive demands, was overcritical and cruel" towards his runners, it said.

The Liberation Daily said recently that Ma owned three Mercedes Benzes and had spent seven million yuan (\$824,000) on his training centre out of total winnings of his athletes of 10 million yuan (\$1.18 million).

It said the cars were prizes given to three of his athletes at the Stuttgart World Championships.

The Liberation Daily quoted Wang as saying she had received 170,000 yuan (\$20,000), US\$60,300 and HK\$1,000 (US\$128) from Ma and that Qu had received about 65,000 yuan (\$7,650).



Great Britain's Mark Foster gasps for breath after competing in the 50-metre freestyle (AFP photo)

German swimmers dominate World Cup

HONG KONG (AFP) — Germany's swimmers, led by 200m freestyle record-holder, Franziska Van Almsick, dominated the field for the second day at the World Cup meeting Wednesday.

Van Almsick powered to victory in the 100m and 400m freestyle events, after wins in the 200m and 50m freestyle races on the first day.

Compatriot Sandra Volker easily captured gold in the 100m backstroke, but her performance fell short of expectations following her world record-breaking swim in the 50m backstroke event Tuesday.

The German men also left few medal opportunities for the competition, with Jirka Letzin sweeping to victory in the 50m and 200m events, adding to his 100m backstroke title Wednesday.

But despite the strong showing by the German contingent, winning 22 of 34 events, Ireland, Britain and Belgium all had good individual performances to add spice to a competition overshadowed by China's last-minute withdrawal.

Michelle Smith of Ireland stormed to victory in the 200m butterfly and picked up a silver in the 100m individual medley to add to the two golds she won in the 100m butterfly and 200m individual medley on the first day.

Briton Mark Foster, who has been nursing a back injury, still managed to pick up two titles, with wins in the 50m freestyle and butterfly events.

Belgium's Brigitte Becue also struck gold twice, winning both the 100m and 200m breaststroke events.

China's absence at the meet, officially because of visa problems and a conflicting training schedule, followed failed drug tests by seven Chinese swimmers at the Asian Games in Hiroshima last October.

Hong Kong was the first of seven meetings in the World Cup. It moves on to Finland, France, Britain, Germany, Italy and Sweden.

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- (2) A certified copy of the Bachelor's degree.
- (3) A certified copy of the Master's transcript.
- (4) A certified copy of the Master's degree.
- (5) A certified copy of the doctoral transcript.
- (6) A certified copy of the doctoral degree.
- (7) Three personal photos.
- (8) A copy of the Curriculum Vitae.
- (9) A certified copy of pages 1-7 of the passport, and a certified copy of the family identity card.
- (10) A copy of all published/unpublished research.
- (11) A document that proves that he is free from any commitment to any private or public institution.

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Chess champion Garry Kasparov concentrates on an opening move during the Oct. 93 championship (AFP photo)

Chess rebels plan 1996 reunification match

(ANILA (AFP) — The World Chess Federation (FIDE) is close to coaxing rebel champion Garry Kasparov back into the fold, and a reunification match for the world championship is likely in 1996, FIDE Chief Florencio Campomanes said Wednesday.

The Filipino sportsman on an unprecedented fourth term of the federation in Moscow last month with the support of his long-time Russian nemesis Kasparov, said they have since signed joint declarations towards unity and cooperation.

Then-reigning FIDE world champion Kasparov and his challenger, Nigel Short of Britain, broke away from the federation and formed their rebel Professional Chess Association (PCA) following a dispute over prize money and venue in early 1993. Kasparov subsequently won the rebel championship while FIDE organised an alternate world championship from among the two losing finalists in the last candidates' cycle. Former world champion Anatoly Karpov beat Dutch grandmaster Jan Timman and was declared FIDE world champion.

Campomanes said Kasparov and his fellow rebels have apparently come around "to the realisation that they cannot live with FIDE," and that when a prodigal son returns, you must accept him.

He said he and Kasparov were proposing that "to end the current confusion among chess fans, sponsors and media, a reunification match will be organised in 1996" after the end of the current eliminations for the next PCA and FIDE world championships.

He said they also proposed that a joint commission be formed "on an equal representation basis" to organise the reunification rules by May 1, 1995.

Under the proposed plan, the PCA will remain "in its capacity as a commercial entity" which will "manage commercial events and will guarantee the annual payment of an agreed contribution to FIDE's expenses."

Campomanes said FIDE would also restructure its own setup "to make it commercially more efficient."

The FIDE chief said the two organisations are planning to organise tournaments on the same line as the ATP tour of professional tennis, and eventually hope that chess will eventually make it as an Olympic sport.

International Olympic Committee (IOC) chief Juan Antonio Samaranch attended the last Chess Olympiad in Moscow last month, and Campomanes expressed hope that chess would be included as an "exhibition event" in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

He said it would probably be "too much to say" that chess would become an Olympic event in Sydney in 2000, but commented that "the terrain is promising."

Campomanes said he foresaw top chess players eventually earning prize money comparable to those won by top tennis pros on the ATP tour.

He also dismissed suggestions that powerful chess computers would eventually topple the world's top human players. "Do not fear the machine, use it," he said.

He said he had discussed with Kasparov the formation of a body to improve the current system of rating chess players, saying that the current ELO system "needs improvement due both to the advances in computer technology and to errors which have come to light."

Jordan Soccer League

Competition heats up with 5 weeks remaining

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Thirty matches remain before the Kingdom's most prestigious soccer title — the First Division Championship — is decided. However, unlike other seasons, at least three teams are still in contention, and all results will be crucial in deciding the champion and relegation-threatened last four.

During the past two weeks, leaders Al Hussein fell to third place after losing 2-1 to Kufusoum and 2-0 to Al Ramtha. Meanwhile, Al Wihdat took the lead after two easy victories: 6-0 over Al Jeel and 1-0 over newcomers Shabab Al Hussein.

Al Wihdat who last won the title in 1991 remained the only unbeaten team and improved their scoring record to 24-3. Al Ramtha are now two points behind Al Wihdat, and have only lost one match. Meanwhile, Al Faisali, who won the title in 1992 and 1993, have been unable to improve their standing after three draws

and a surprise 1-0 loss to Al Arabi in the second round. Whether Al Hussein win their first ever 1st division crown or Al Wihdat secure their only title of the year depends on how well they fare in the upcoming weeks.

Al Wihdat have the toughest matches against Al Ramtha and Al Hussein, while Al Faisali's remaining matches are easier except for their clash with Al Hussein.

That however does not necessarily mean that the leaders have already secured their matches against the rest of the teams.

The top three teams' matches against current fifth placed Al Ahli may well be a determining factor. Other surprise may also pop up any time.

Like the battle at the top of the 12-team competition, another fierce challenge is under way at the other end of the standings.

For the second consecutive year, four teams will be relegated.

While the last three — Al Jeel, Al Karmel and Sha-

bab Al Hussein — may have already surrendered and seem destined to drop back to the second division, the identity of the fourth team is not yet known.

Al Qadissieh and Al Arabi are nearest the relegation zone, and Kufusoum, the only newcomer not among the last four, will have to maintain their results to keep a halfway standing and stick among the top group.

Though Al Jazireh have had an inconsistent form in the second round, they are still in sixth place, and Al Ahli have scored three consecutive wins that lifted them up to fifth.

The top scorers are Mouaffaq Abu Hdeib (Al Ramtha), Youssef Obeidat (Kufusoum), Aref Hussein (Al Hussein), Riyas Tadros (Al Faisali), Jihad Abdul Munem (Al Wihdat).

Top teams eye season's remaining titles

The top four teams have their eyes set on the two remaining soccer crowns of the season — the Jordan Cup and the first division. Titleholders Al Faisali

have so far secured at least one title — the 1994 Cup Winners' Cup.

Al Hussein captured their first ever soccer crown when they overcame Al Faisali to win the 1994 Soccer Federation Shield.

After falling from first to third place, they enter the

18th work of the competition after being knocked out by Al Faisali in the Jordao Cup semifinals Monday.

Al Wihdat's last major title was the 1992 Cup Winners' Cup while Al Ramtha's last major title was the 1993 Federation Shield.

Schedule of 18th week:

Thursday 5/1
Jeel vs. Arabi 2:30 p.m. Petra Stadium
Karmel vs. Ramtha 2:30 p.m. Al Hassan Stadium
Shabab Al Hussein vs. Al Jazireh 2:30 p.m. Amman Stadium

Friday 6/1
Wihdat vs. Kufusoum 2:30 p.m. Amman Stadium
Faisali vs. Qadissieh 2:30 p.m. Petra Stadium
Ahli vs. Hussein 2:30 p.m. Al Hassan Stadium

Standings after 17th week

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts.
Wihdat	17	12	5	—	24	3	29
Ramtha	17	11	5	1	35	10	27
Hussein	17	12	2	3	42	18	26
Faisali	17	8	7	2	28	9	23
Ahli	17	7	5	5	23	20	19
Jazireh	17	7	5	5	21	18	19
Kufusoum	17	8	1	8	27	28	17
Arabi	17	5	5	7	18	26	15
Qadissieh	17	4	6	7	18	22	14
Shabab Al Hussein	17	1	4	12	17	37	6
Karmel	17	1	4	12	12	41	6
Jeel	17	1	1	15	12	43	3

Egypt attempt to cross bridge

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Egypt attempt to bridge a 26-year gap when they visit Algeria this weekend for the most appealing qualifying tie in a 13-match African Nations' Cup programme.

The Pharaohs' only success over their traditional rivals came three decades ago in Cairo, and the Algerians have since triumphed three times in the final stages.

Algeria won a 1980 semi-final on penalties, succeeded 3-1 in a third-place play-off four years later, and also had two goals to spare when they met in the first round five years' ago.

Three-time champions Egypt go to Algeria as Group 4 leaders with five points from a goalless draw in Sudan and decisive home victories over Tanzania and Ethiopia.

But any illusions that the Dutch-coached team is poised to conquer Africa again were shattered this week in Tunisia, where they conceded two first-half goals to lose a warm-up game.

Politically-troubled Algeria have slipped considerably since winning the 1990 African title, with the expected

revival under recently appointed coach Rabah Madjer not materialising.

Madjer, a former African Footballer of the Year, has guided his country to respectful draws in Ethiopia and Uganda, but the failure to defeat Sudan at home triggered strong criticism.

Improving Tanzania lie second and could take at least one point back from Ethiopia, who made drastic following a heavy loss to Uganda only to suffer greater humiliation in Egypt.

seeding, play in Dakar while surprise pacesetters Togo should collect two more points at home to uninspiring Mauritania.

Struggling Zambia have recalled several professionals, including inspirational captain Kalusha Bwalya from Mexico, for a Group 5 game in Mauritius that will evoke painful memories.

The national team won a Nations' Cup qualifier on the Indian Ocean island a couple of days before 18 of them

AFRICAN SOCCER

Malawi, performing above expectations in Group 1, visit Cameroon, who suffered a sensational defeat in Lesotho last November and lost leading official Roger Milla to Indonesia this week.

Zaire, without a win in three matches, host Lesotho, whose coach Style Phumo is remarkably confident considering the seven-goal hiding they received in Kinshasa two years' ago.

Senegal and Tunisia, battling to justify their Group 2

perished when their plane plunged into the sea off Gabon in April 1993.

Although Botswana are bottom of the Group 6 standings, they can expect no mercy from Mali, who were upset by Namibia on an previous journey to southern Africa.

Angola host Mozambique in a clash of Portuguese-speaking countries and Namibia make the long journey north to Guinea, a team hungry for points after two consecutive away losses.

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The job involves considerable amount of dealing with people (members and others), regular coordination with the board and the subcommittees of the society, and some travel in Jordan. Applicants must have basic computer skills and be able to type. Interested applicants should submit their C.V. to the Friends of Archaeology office, near the Fourth Circle of Jabal Amman, before January 18. The FOA office phone is 696682.

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Majali defends government stand in Chechen crisis

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali said Wednesday that Jordan had "seriously and in practical terms" stood by the Chechen people in their conflict with Russia.

Responding to what he called "provocative statements" by Deputy Tounjan Faisal, a Circassian, Dr. Majali said Jordan had conveyed its position to Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Viktor Posolovskiy during his recent visit to the Kingdom and has instructed the Ministry of Health and the Hashemite Charity Organisation to send humanitarian aid to Chechnya.

"I cannot send the Arah army (to Chechnya). One should recognise the limitations of one's power," said Dr. Majali.

In the fiery way that has come to characterise her performance in the House, Ms. Faisal had accused the government of adopting a position on Chechnya that conflicts with that of the people as expressed by their representatives.

Accusing the government of promising the Russian Federation to prevent Jordan's Chechen and Circassian population from helping the people in Chechnya, Ms. Faisal alleged that the government asked Russia to "oppress the Chechens but not in so violent a way."

Ms. Faisal's accusations did not go down well with the rapporteur of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Jamal Saraihi, who stressed that the House has issued a clear statement in support of the Chechen people's right to self-determination and that the government's position was similar to that of the lawmakers.

"We cannot deny the role

of the government and the leadership" in the Chechen crisis, said Mr. Saraihi before the House referred to his committee the issue of how to deal with the conflict.

The House earlier voted down a proposal by Islamic Action Front Deputy Abdul Munem Abu Zant to form a special committee on the crisis in Chechnya in a show of solidarity with the Muslim people in the Caucasus republic.

Deputies opposed to the proposal said the House's position on Chechnya should be articulated by the Foreign Affairs Committee in whose meetings deputies with proposals on how to deal with the conflict can participate.

Up to 50,000 Jordanians are estimated to be of Chechen and Circassian origins and they are represented by three deputies in the House.

Dr. Majali said the government had given permission to the Chechen community to collect donations to their brethren in Chechnya and the community has organised rallies to condemn the Russian attack on Chechnya.

During the session, the House listened to ministers' responses to questions raised by deputies. At the request of Deputy Theeb Abdullah, Minister of Finance Sami Gannouch said he would refer to the general prosecutor the case of the glass factory in Ma'an which was shut down after facing many financial and administrative problems.

The House also approved the draft amended law on the Institute of Public Administration and the draft amended law on the notary public as presented by the government. It also approved the draft amended law on public administration after introducing few amendments to it and rejecting those made by the Upper House of Parliament.



CHECHEN WAR: Chechens try to identify the bodies of two civilians killed by a bomb in the road going to Grozny (see page one) (AFP photo)

Prince Mohammad, Suharto review relations, seek increased trade ties

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the personal representative of His Majesty King Hussein, Wednesday met with Indonesian President Mohammad Suharto in Jakarta and conveyed to him a written message from the King dealing with bilateral relations.

The message expressed Jordan's keen interest to enhance Jordanian-Indonesian cooperation in cultural, economic and scientific fields.

Prince Mohammad re-

viewed with President Suharto bilateral relations and issues of common interest to Jordan and Indonesia, with the Prince expressing pride in the close ties between the two Muslim countries.

He also praised development witnessed in Indonesia, the largest Muslim country, in various fields, and praised the country's role in the Non-Aligned Movement.

Prince Mohammad renewed an invitation extended by King Hussein to President

Suharto to visit Jordan. President Suharto expressed keenness in bolstering bilateral ties, especially in trade and exchange of commodities.

He also called for boosting cooperation among the countries of the South within the framework of the Non-Aligned Movement and adopt a unified stand vis-a-vis changes in the world.

The Indonesian president asked Prince Mohammad to convey his greetings and best

wishes to King Hussein.

Part of the meeting was attended by Her Royal Highness Princess Taghreed Mohammad, Mrs. Suharto and Jordan's Ambassador to Indonesia Lu'ail Al Khashman and Mrs. Khashman.

Prince Mohammad and Princess Taghreed, who arrived in Jakarta Tuesday on a two-day visit to Indonesia, on Wednesday visited museums there and the city of Taman Mana, a replica of all of the country's provinces and cities.

West weighs options after GIA threat

BONN (Agencies) — The German government on Wednesday said Germany, Britain and the United States should cooperate over an ultimatum from armed Islamic extremists to close their embassies in Algeria within four days or face attack.

Deputy foreign ministry spokesman Martin Erdmann said: "We are in contact with these countries (Britain and the United States) to find a common response or joint action" in light of the threat to kill all non-Muslim foreigners.

The British government said the threat came from the most radical of the factions at war with Algeria's secular army-backed government, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), but Germany refused to name the authors of the ultimatum.

Mr. Erdmann said he had the "impression" that the letters sent to the United States and Britain were identical to the one received by the German authorities.

The writers said they would kill "all non-believers

in cold blood" from Jan. 7. U.S. experts said the letters could be hoaxes or the work of a mentally unstable person, but the German government has decided to take the threat very seriously. More than 70 expatriates have already been murdered in Algeria since 1993.

The German embassy in Algiers is currently staffed by 17 people, of whom Ambassador Friedrich Reiche and nine others have diplomatic status. The German school and the Goethe Institute have been closed and German firms have repatriated the families of their employees in the country.

According to the foreign ministry, 265 German nationals are still in the strife-torn country, the great majority of them married to Algerian nationals.

A British Foreign office spokesman said on Tuesday the threat, written in German, had been received by the embassy in Bonn in the last few days. Similar messages appeared to have been

sent to other Western countries with interests in Algeria.

It ordered all diplomatic staff to leave Algeria as quickly as possible, break off contacts with the country and clear the embassy by Jan. 7.

"Otherwise, after the ultimatum has run out, we can give no guarantee about the lives of foreign nationals," the statement said. "After that, all 'infidels' (unbelievers) will be killed in cold blood."

A U.S. official said in Washington that the U.S. embassy in Bonn had received a similar letter.

The U.S. official said that a preliminary investigation of the incident indicates that it might be a hoax, stating that the "initial impression is that it does not match patterns that we know."

Algerian Interior Minister Abdel Rahman Meziane Cherif described the threats as "manipulation."

"It's just manipulation and show," the minister said on the sidelines of a conference of Arab interior ministers in

Tunis. "Algeria guarantees the security of all those who live and work there."

The German spokesman said one possibility being considered was replacing separate Western embassies with a single joint diplomatic mission. But he said no decision had been reached.

The GIA claimed responsibility for the hijacking of an Air France passenger plane eleven days ago. It ended when French commandos stormed the airliner in Marseille, killing the four hijackers and rescuing 169 hostages.

France is sending a mission to Algiers to seek guarantees for the safety of its nationals after the hijacking.

Following reports France no longer trusted the Algerian authorities after disputes between the two during the hijacking, Foreign Minister Alain Juppe told RTL Radio: "It is normal and it is our duty to take extra precautions. In the next few days we will send a mission to study how to reinforce security."

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Pakistani ambassador ends term in Jordan with fond memories

By Cathy King
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — After a five-year tenure in Amman, Pakistani Ambassador Tareq Alifridi and wife Cristina depart for Portugal where the ambassador will take up office soon.

Mr. Alifridi arrived here on Jan. 17, 1990 to take up his second ambassadorship following four years in Brazil. In Jordan, he said, he was given the opportunity to witness a chapter in the history of the region.

"I have been very fortunate," Mr. Alifridi said in an interview with the Jordan Times. "It is not often that one is given the opportunity to witness such events as the unfolding of the peace process, starting with the Madrid Conference, then the Oslo accords, the Washington Declaration and finally the signing of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty."

He said that his term of office here had been an eventful period which also saw the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait when around 20,000 Pakistani nationals were evacuated from Iraq and Kuwait through Jordan.

The embassy provided housing for 3,000-4,000 people at a time before providing transportation home.

"The Gulf crisis resulted in the isolation of Jordan but the Jordanian government and people reacted impressively and with dignity," Mr. Alifridi added.

Another event Mr. Alifridi

said he would regard with fondness was the people's reaction to the safe return of His Majesty King Hussein in September 1992 from the U.S. following successful surgery there.

"I will always remember the reception His Majesty received when he returned from the United States and the crowd's genuine outpouring of love and devotion," the diplomat said.

Relations between Pakistan and Jordan are close, he said, because of the physical help reciprocated when needed which created a bond.

During his stay in Jordan, he added, there had been visits here by two Pakistani prime ministers, the chairman of the Upper House, the speaker of the Lower House and the head of the Pakistani military among others.

Trade, he said, was currently in favour of Jordan. Pakistan is a major importer of Jordanian phosphates.

Earlier this year the two countries signed an agreement involving Jordanian Phosphate Mines Company and the Fauji Foundation in Pakistan.

This is a \$370 million project, and a holding company has been formed. Hopefully this will lead to more economic collaboration in the future," he said.

On a cultural level, Pakistan participated in the Jerash Festival in 1990, held a fashion show here, sent two polo teams, the Davis Cup

team and the soccer team twice.

Mr. Alifridi himself is a keen polo player and for much of his duration in Amman he has played twice or three times a week and often with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, another keen player, he said.

In addition to folklore groups that have played here, he said that the first art exhibition of Pakistani young artists was held at the Royal Cultural Centre in December.

On the educational front, a Pakistani university professor, paid and funded by the Pakistani government, lectures in history, Pakistan studies and Urdu at Al al-Bait University.

"We also award 32 places annually to Jordanian students to study in various institutions in Pakistan," he added.

According to Mr. Alifridi, there is a Jordan-Pakistan Graduates Club for the 2,000-3,000 graduates from Pakistani educational institutions which he added created another bond between the two countries.

Mr. Alifridi, who has been with the diplomatic corps since 1973, said he and his wife, now four-months pregnant, were happy here with many friends.

"Everyone here has been warm, friendly and hospitable, and I think I can say we have many friends and will certainly miss them and Jordan very much," he said.

Washington dismisses Alexandria statement, defends Israeli stand

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States has said it disagreed with a statement adopted by Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia last week blaming Israel for the lack of progress in peace talks with Syria.

"We reject the proposition that one side or any side is responsible for any obstacle to peace," said State Department spokesman Michael McCurry when asked about the statement adopted at the Alexandria summit.

Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia accused the Jewish state of blocking the talks and demanded that the United States and Russia — the co-sponsors of the Middle East peace talks — push Israel to be more pliable.

Mr. McCurry's statement on Tuesday was the first official U.S. reaction to the declaration.

The spokesman stressed that there were still "serious gaps" between Syria and Israel on a peace agreement but added that the two countries must act to reduce them.

"The momentum towards a comprehensive peace will continue in 1995," he added.

The sticking point has been the timetable for the Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Syrian and Israeli military officials met quietly in Washington in late December and Mr. McCurry declined to answer questions on

Israeli undercover agents killing militants — Sneh

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Specially-trained Israeli army undercover units are liquidating Palestinian activists in the occupied territories, Health Minister Ephraim Sneh said here Wednesday.

Mr. Sneh, a reserve general, said the units "track down terrorist groups and liquidate them before they can carry out anti-Israeli attacks."

The "terrorist" groups operated among the Iranian-backed Hizbollah in South Lebanon and the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad in the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank, Mr. Sneh told army radio.

"We have to destroy them by resorting to tricks, and we have been making a determined effort to do that recently," he said. "Fighting terrorism is the main challenge we have to tackle in 1995."

The radio said an undercover unit was responsible for killing two Palestinian militants near Bethlehem on the West Bank Monday.

Palestinian police said that 10 Israeli soldiers in civilian clothes were arrested on a search operation in autonomous Gaza.

The army on Wednesday admitted the soldiers had been taken by Palestinian police to the joint Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) liaison committee office in the Strip but said they were in uniform and denied they had been arrested or interrogated.

A spokesman said the unit had been following a car driven by Palestinians they suspected of kidnapping a soldier after a rumour that turned out to be false.

The daily Haaretz said the Israelis belonged to the undercover "Samson" unit who dress in Arab clothes, speak fluent Arabic and can melt into the local population.

Palestinian sources say the units are based in Jewish settlements.

The incident came a day after Israeli troops killed three Palestinians in the worst such clash since autonomy began.

Palestinian police chief Nasr Yusef said Tuesday that the soldiers in civilian clothes were arrested near Khan Yunis in southern Gaza.

"We got a report yesterday from the joint liaison committee, but we are re-opening the investigation because Israel said it was not right," said a senior Palestinian police officer who refused to be identified.

COLUMN

'Je ne regrette rien' — Mitterrand

PARIS (AFP) — Ailing French President Francois Mitterrand said he has no regrets as he enters the final four months of his political career and possibly the final months of his life. Speaking at a traditional New Year ceremony when French political leaders express their wishes for the year ahead, the ailing head of state played down any nostalgic potential of the event. "It is with no particular regret that I will see the end arrive," he said, replying to speeches by Senate Speaker Rene Monory and National Assembly Speaker Philippe Seguin. On New Year's Eve, in his traditional broadcast message to the French people, Mr. Mitterrand made a moving reference to the end of 14 years in the Elysee Palace. "I believe in the power of the spirit. I will not leave you," he said. He made no specific reference to whether his health will allow him to remain until the end of his mandate, which expires in May after two-round presidential elections. Mr. Mitterrand, 78, is suffering from prostate cancer, for which he has undergone two operations as well as chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Japan's newest princess named Kako

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Prince Akishino and his wife Princess Kiko, have named their new daughter Kako, meaning "beautiful child," the imperial household agency announced Wednesday. The couple's second daughter was born Dec. 29. The name, announced following the traditional naming ceremony at the Imperial Palace clinic, was chosen by the couple, imperial household officials said. Princess Kiko gave birth to their first baby girl, Mako, in October 1991. Prince Akishino is the younger of Emperor Akihito's two sons. He married Princess Kiko in 1990.

1995: A year of homage to Oscar Wilde

LONDON (AFP) — Admirers of Oscar Wilde have unveiled a plaque in his honour, launching a year of celebration that will also see the writer, wit and bon vivant who scandalised Victorian England elevated to the pantheon of English literature. The plaque was unveiled at London's Theatre Royal, where the premier of Wilde's play *An Ideal Husband* was staged 100 years ago. 1995 also marks the centenary of the playwright's arrest for "sodomy" and indecency. Although the British government last year refused to accord him a posthumous pardon, Tuesday's ceremony was only the first in a series of celebratory events in his honour over the coming 12 months. Even the Church of England will be part of the proceedings, with Wilde's getting his personal plaque on Feb. 14 in Westminster Abbey's Poets' Corner, where the established greats of English literature are commemorated. Born in British-ruled Ireland in 1856, Wilde rocked Victorian society with his homosexual relationship with Lord Alfred "Bosie" Douglas, the son of the Marquis of Queensbury. Deported by the marquis, Wilde was sentenced to two years of hard labour in May 1895 for what was then an illegal activity. The marquis's descendants, however, have not shared his outrage. On Tuesday the current marquis and Wilde's grandson, Merlin Holland, both attended the unveiling ceremony presided by veteran actor John Gielgud. "My father and David (the marquis's off-queensberry's father were great friends and he dedicated a book to my father," said Holland. "This year will see a lot of celebrations but it's nice that the first celebrates his literary achievements." The author of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* never fully recovered from the harsh conditions of Victorian prison life. Once freed, Wilde emigrated to France under a pseudonym, dying there three years later at the age of 44.